



Photographs by Monty Cooper



# Involvement

## It's alive and creative and living in Mowbray

THERE's a building in Mowbray that looks a bit like a warehouse to visitors, but to those who are involved in the Community Arts Project inside, it's something else. The project is a mixed bag of activities. Most of them take place at night and over weekends. You might wander in and hear a saxophone or jazz piano, watch a group of teenagers in a drama workshop or a weaving class in action.

this week will bring in some revenue. They try to be as open as possible. If a group approaches Christine to ask if it can use the venue as a meeting place for an activity such as karate, she tries to fit it in, although priority is given to fine arts. All the space is flexible and the rooms are used for a variety of classes. Christine has an activity board in her office so she knows what is on at any one time. "The whole idea is that there is a

relaxed atmosphere and no rules. Although the classes are structured we are not a school or institution but a place where people can come and develop their creativity." Backbone of the project is co-operation and ingenuity: if the art classes need easels, a core of committed members makes them out of discarded wood; the recently-completed darkroom is a converted toilet; murals, painted by members, brighten the bare walls; and

mobiles, made in the children's art classes, also have a cheering effect. Members are expected to pay for the materials they use, but if they cannot afford to (many are unemployed) they can apply for a bursary or their classmates help them. All the teachers — they're called co-ordinators — are volunteers. They need to be good organizers and give up a lot of free time. The project has a resident artist, Livingstone Gocini, who runs the graphic workshop. Sally Blumenthal

