



Early morning in Wallasey...and the gypsies prepare for eviction.

# Gypsies kept on the move

One day last Summer a group of tinkers camped on waste ground in the Great Homer Street area of Liverpool, the tinkers or gypsies as they are usually known, had been evicted by neighbouring councils and Liverpool council quickly tried to do the same.

Their first attempt—on July 15th—failed, though five friends of the gypsies were arrested.

Next day the twenty caravans moved to another site off Shaw St., Everton. On July 17th the Corporation workmen were sent to evict them. About twenty policemen with Land-Rovers and Mini's turned up as well as friends of the gypsies who had gone along to act as witnesses.

The Corporation lorry was hitched to a caravan in which was a woman with children and a lighted stove. The observers pointed out that it was illegal to move caravans containing people or fires, but Police inspector Rafferty and the workmen decided to go ahead.

A man then lay down in front of the lorry, and in the war of nerves that followed the lorry ran over the man's foot. This worried the Corporation workmen, so they just towed one caravan onto the road and went away, leaving all the others where they were.

## Peace

After this came a spell of peace. The families re-established their businesses as scrap-dealers, tarmacers and furniture dealers. The younger children went to a play-group, one of them, Jimmy Collins set up some running water on the site.

Jimmy and his brother Christie offered to pay the Corporation £3-£5 for every caravan on the site and to install lavatories if they could be allowed to stay.

The Corporation replied that all the waste land in Liverpool was needed for building.

Meanwhile councils throughout Merseyside and the Wirral were gypsies to fill up. There were about sixty caravans there when the Health Department decided to act.

In May this year fifty-six summonses were served under the Health Act to get a Court Order compelling the gypsies to abate the health hazard.

The health hazards were: lack of toilets, lack of running water, and rubbish on the site. Although there are toilets only a few minutes' walk away, the magistrate thought the gypsies would probably not use these in the middle of the night. Jimmy's water supply was illegal as he was not paying for it (the Corporation had refused his money). The rubbish on the site was no worse than that on many other patches of waste land in the city, but the magistrate found the health hazard proved.

This meant that the gypsies would have to leave or face fines of £20 and then £5 a day for as long as the hazard continued (i.e. for as long as they stayed). As a result, most of the families left.

But the fact is that the gypsies are being punished for the faults of the Corporation. Under the Caravan Sites Act, the Corporation is legally obliged to provide a site with toilets and running water. This the Corporation has failed to do.

Early one morning Jimmy got up to find his 'illegal' water supply had been cut off. That was the last straw. The next day the Collins family left Liverpool.

Meanwhile Lawrence Rooney and his family, who had also been on the Everton site, took up the magistrate's suggestion—that if they camped in a field there wouldn't be a health hazard. So the Rooneys and their six caravans went to an unused field in Moreton. Wallasey council evicted them within 48 hours.

They returned to Everton, where they now face massive fines simply because they don't have the facilities the Corporation is bound by law to provide for them.

# BBC suppresses Scaffold's film

A film featuring the Scaffold and a West Indian family talking about their experience of racial prejudice has been suppressed by the BBC.

The film was one of a series made on Stress now being shown on BBC 1, each one including sketches by the Scaffold. The other programmes deal with the stresses of working on a production line, old people, re-housing, and children going into hospital—but the programme on the immigrant family will not be shown as part of the series.

In it Christopher Austin, an immigrant from Barbados, talks of his wife and daughter about the problems of life in Britain.

Their problems resemble those of most families—but they are also Black. And that intensifies their problems.

When Mr. Austin's daughter first went to school she came back upset at being called Sambo. His wife finds people try to avoid being served by her when she is serving behind the shop counter.

The family catalogue the hundreds of small instances which go to make up the ugly nature of racial prejudice.

Interspersed in the interview are lengths of film showing Barbados as paradise—for the white millionaires.

The programme opens with John Gorman and Roger Mc Gough drinking in a pub. They air their problems and grouses. The voice of Mike Mc Gear joins in. He tells them he has the same problems.

'You're just like everyone else,' is the reply.

'Yes, but I'm black,' says the voice.

The Scaffold appear at the end of the programme parading the clichés: 'They come over here on the banana boats, living on the dole, and eating curried Kit-E-Kat. Yes, but where would our hospitals be without them, they do keep the buses running and there are a few good ones after all.'

The head of BBC's Further Education Department, Mrs. Beryl Radley saw the programme and didn't like it.

The date for its transmission was cancelled and as the other programmes were finished they were viewed immediately by those further up the hierarchy—an unusual step.

The official reason given by the BBC is that the programme exceeded the brief laid down. 'The series was meant to be a science series about the nature of stress,' said a spokesman for BBC Press Office.

This particular programme didn't fit in the overall concept of the series.

'There's no reason why it should not be shown. But we can't say at this stage where it could be fitted in.'

Before he began the series director Francis Fuchs was told his contract will not be renewed when it ends in September.

At a meeting of the production staff in the BBC's Further Education Department about the programme, Mrs. Radley refused to let anyone discuss the reason why it couldn't be shown.

The decision not to show the programme was not hers alone—it was taken in consultation with assistant controller Don Grattan. John Gorman's comments were

by **BOB DANIELS**

'The reason offered to us for the programme not being shown was that it changed the brief that was originally set. It was too much about racialism.'

Attempts are being made to get the film for showing on Merseyside, and there is some talk of it being shown at the Banned Film Festival to be held in London soon.



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# Looking for a place to play

Liverpool is full of grand-sounding names. St. Andrew's Gardens, Summer Seat, Myrtle Gardens, Kensington Fields, the list is endless and they all sound like something out of an estate agent's dream.

They don't boast a blade of grass between them. But at least Kensington Fields does have a touch of green nearby in Kensington Gardens.

Until January that is. When even Kensington Gardens will disappear. Liverpool Corporation are taking the land for a new reservoir, and only the streets will be left for the kids to play in.

An objection has been lodged with the Town Clerk by a local resident living in Jubilee Drive, and this may lead to an enquiry.

But when it comes to thinking about providing alternative play-sites the Corporation are dragging their feet yet again.

The Water Department offered

£2,300 to buy play equipment for street sites. So far only about £600 has been spent and no-one is saying where the rest is.

Kensington Fields Community Council have asked the Corporation to put an all-weather football pitch on the Hall Lane demolition site.

A report from the recreation and open spaces department on the football pitch is being considered by the Corporation.

Mrs. Joan Smith, of the Community Council said: 'I sometimes think we are knocking our heads against a brick wall.'

'First of all they told us they'd take half the park for two years. Now they say they want all the park for five years. In that time our children will have grown up.'

'One of these play-areas that are supposed to be replacing the park is right down in Minto Street.'

'The Corporation Engineer who visited us didn't know where Minto Street was and hadn't seen the Hall Lane site.'

It's always the same. The inner areas have precious little open space but the Corporation barely give it a second thought when they decide to destroy what there is.

# ON GUARD

The National Council for Civil Liberties have recently been approached by several city and town councillors, who are increasingly concerned about the number of complaints they are receiving from members of the public about treatment they have received from

the police.

A meeting was held on July 7. It is hoped that as a result of this a group of people will investigate individual cases and prepare reports.

Anyone interested should contact the NCCL at 81 Dale Street.



Readers may be happy to hear that W.H. Smith lost £1 million through strikes last year, but Britain's most blatant profits poly group still swept to record profit of £4,689,000.

NAME	ADDRESS	DEGREE	SUBJECT

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