

COUNTERSPY

Compiled by Arthur Townley

Wash it!

DRY CLEANING is an expensive business and it's not always as necessary as the labels inside the clothes try to make out.

A friend of ours had a tweed suit cleaned three times (at 65p a time) and eventually decided it looked too scruffy to clean again. Before sending it to a jumble sale she washed it by hand. It came out a treat, despite the 'Dry clean only' label.

When asked why they were so keen to keep dry cleaners in business, the makers said: "We used to put 'Hand wash' labels in but we got garments returned shrunk - because they had been done with water at 180 degrees in a machine."

So if you're sure the colours won't run and want to save a cleaning bill, the chances are a drop of the old soap and WARM water in a wash basin won't do any harm.

A winner

AFTER YEARS of painstaking research, Planet Publications have introduced their Money Magnet plan which means YOU can win the pools every single week. For only £10, Planet guarantee not only a win every week, but a first dividend once in twelve weeks.

Of course Littlewoods and Vernons have been giving away plans free for years, with much the same results - regular but very small payouts.

One person's experience shows exactly how the Magnet plan works. After paying his initial £10, his weekly stake was £2.10. For this, his average weekly winnings were a startling 10p, except for a bonanza second dividend win when he picked up £1.08.

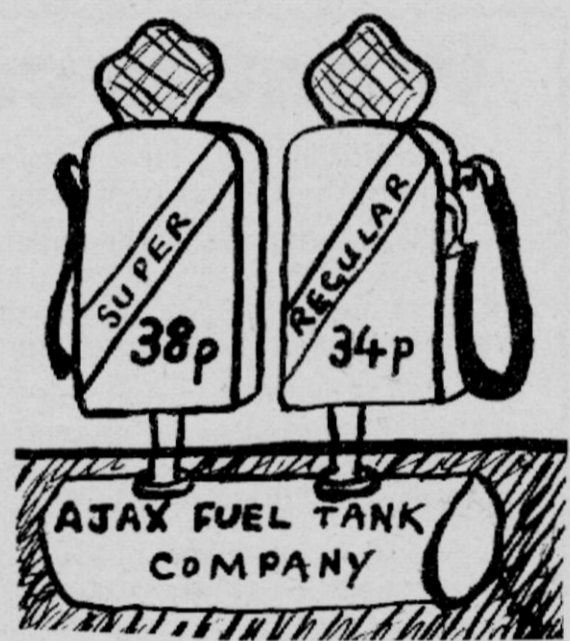


SIXTY pensioners in Liverpool are buying cheap fruit and vegetables through a food co-operative. Once a week two students, Moira Renwick and Roger Bradbury go to the wholesale fruit market in Prescot Road and buy boxes of oranges and bananas - which are then sold to pensioners at 2p each (roughly cost price).

The co-operative, which is run by the Stonecroft Community Group, also gets special loaves made by a local baker for 3p each.

Several pensioners have told the group that they never used to eat fruit before the scheme started - because they didn't like asking in a shop for just one orange or banana.

● If you're interested in starting a co-operative in your area, phone 220 4256 for more information.



Who needs a log book?

THE CAR log book, long a valuable check for second hand car buyers, will be abolished by the government next year.

Instead of the full history of a vehicle given in the log book, a new registration form will show only the name of the current owner. The change is due to centralisation of all driving and vehicle licence records in one office in Swansea.

Even some car dealers - the honest ones, anyway - are unhappy about the change. Since the Trade Descriptions Act, they are liable to be prosecuted for a false

description, and the log book enables them to check the history of a car which someone wants to sell them. A simple thing like a mileage check will soon have to be done through Swansea.

All this means that the dishonest dealers will have a far easier time cheating the customer. And no historical record means that a car may have been hammered by a private hire company or the police without the customer knowing. The Swansea office will not necessarily give you information - they will check up on you before they say anything.

Tick, stop, tick, stop

A LIVERPOOL WOMAN has been trying for more than five months to get an alarm clock that works.

Mrs Marianne Kale of Egerton Road, Wavertree, bought two 'date-and-day' travelling alarm clocks on September 2 last year from a shop in Lawrence Road.

After a week she discovered both clocks were faulty. The shopkeeper asked her to bring them in to be exchanged.

On October 20 he gave her two similar clocks. A week later Mrs Kale found one of these clocks was also faulty.

Mrs Kale is a student nurse in a St Helens hospital and needed her alarm clock to get up early and study.

She is only in Liverpool when off duty, so in December she asked a friend to return the clock. The shopkeeper told her friend to call in a week for a new one. Her friend called but the shopkeeper said he had not seen the traveller to exchange the clock.

Since then Mrs Kale has been to the shop and telephoned several

times. Her friend had called three times but to no avail.

The Free Press phoned the shopkeeper, who said Mrs Kale had been waiting less than the average length of time. He put the blame on the importer (the clock is foreign made) - and refused to name the importer.

He said: "Mrs Kale is one person I will see gets the same clock, same colour and same particulars... and when she does I hope she comes here no more."

Counterspy will be keeping an eye on the situation.

Meaty...

NOW THAT beef is so expensive the truth is out about that great British institution - the sausage.

Why, you may be wondering, are beef sausages still cheaper than pork sausages? The answer is that only half a 'beef' sausage is actually meat, while pork sausages contain 65% pork.

Meatier

CAN'T AFFORD STEAK? Rubbish everybody can afford steak when it's done the Walls way. None of that nasty juicy, hard-to-chew stuff. Just finely ground meat stuck together with good old sodium polyphosphate.

Not steak? A Leeds magistrate was inclined to agree. He fined Walls (owned by Unilever) £50 for filling their 'Country Bake' steak pies with the stuff.

Krook's lok

IF YOUR car isn't one of those recent models incorporating a steering column lock, and you have the type of lock which hooks over the steering wheel, it may give less protection than you think.

Many owners have found that not only are they useless against a thief, but they mean buying a new steering wheel when you get the car back. Thieves just bend down the steering wheel and unhook the lock.

Labour carries on with house sales

LIVERPOOL'S Labour-controlled city council has sold 240 houses in just nine months.

Ald. Joe Morgan, housing chairman, must take much of the blame for this reduction in the city's housing stock.

When Labour won the elections last May, the party decided - in line with their national policy - to ban the sale of council homes, except where tenants had already paid their deposit.

But Ald. Morgan was later given delegated powers to sell houses to tenants, provided they had paid their surveyors' fees and also in cases of hardship.

He has interpreted 'hardship' so widely that the selling has continued at a startling pace.

Many council tenants buying their

own homes are also being given priority in the long repairs waiting list. Some of these repairs are major structural ones costing several hundred pounds - exactly those which are rarely done for ordinary tenants.

The main reason for opposing the sale of council homes is that only the best ones are sold. So the poorest tenants are left in the worst houses and flats.

Also, because of inflation the corporation's housing stock cannot be replenished at its original cost.

Not all members of the Labour Party are happy about the continued selling of the council homes. Councillors Ken Stewart and Eddie Loyden have tried - but failed - to have Morgan's delegated powers stopped.

LUMP FIRM THWARTED

BUILDING workers on Liverpool's teaching hospital site have stopped a firm trying to introduce lump labour.

The firm, N.B.Builders, of Upper Parliament Street, won a contract to build a lounge and bar, and immediately tried to start work with non-union 'lump' labour.

But building workers employed by the main contractors, McAlpine, blacked the job and N.B.Builders were forced to employ union men - and pay the same bonuses.

McAlpine had originally put in a bid for the work but the architect said the price was too high. The job was then put out for tender, and that of N.B.Builders was accepted.

However, the lump firm later revised their tender when they realised the amount of work involved... and their new price was even higher than McAlpine's.

LIME STREET GARAGES LTD

Year	Turnover	Trading profit	Bank overdraft	LIABILITIES	
				Loan	Creditors
1967	£453,112	£3,586	£34,533	£13,750	£14,890
1968	£600,750	£11,463	£40,161	£15,000	£10,743
1969	£454,429	£9,902	£36,747	£20,458	£21,098
1970	£386,847	£2,189	£34,336	£17,158	£18,908
1971	£349,367	£7,233	£51,439	£19,200	£21,754

Lord Mayor

(Continued from page 1)

Under the law on compensation Ald Meadows' firm can expect a fair market price, plus a payment for disturbance and losses caused by having to move. The aim is to ensure that firms neither suffer nor benefit financially as a result of demolition.

For this reason, a company's financial position and future prospects need to be considered when compensation is assessed.

The Free Press has examined the finances of Lime Street Garages between 1967 and 1971 (later records are not available) and produced the table above. Several points are worth noting:

● Turnover in 1971 was the lowest for at least five years, and has fallen steadily since 1968. At a time of inflation and rising prices, even if business was static, turnover could be expected to rise.

● Profits are just over 2% of turnover in the best years - and fell as low as 0.57% in 1970. Another of the Lord Mayor's firms, Meadows Automobiles Ltd, is far more profitable. In the latest figures available (1969) Meadows Automobiles made £54,996 (9.19%) on a turnover of £599,528. In the same year Lime Street Garages made £9,902 (2.18%) on a turnover of £454,429.

● Lime Street Garages' bank overdraft rose in 1971 to £51,439 - the highest for more than five years. Liabilities also went up. The directors have commented on the need to reduce the overdraft.

● No dividend has been paid for some years. In their reports the directors usually describe the position as satisfactory. In 1971 (profits £2,189) they reported "difficult trading circumstances."

The garage is one of about fifty properties affected by Phase Two of the Strand/Paradise Street development scheme, which includes new law

courts, a bus station, car parks and open space.

Two objections to the compulsory purchase orders have been received - from Lime Street Garages and a firm of estate agents, Wirral Estates. Unlike most compulsory purchase victims, Lord Mayors are in daily contact with local politicians and bureaucrats - so there could be a last-minute effort to settle the dispute with minimum publicity.

If not, the mayor or his representative could well appear at the public inquiry. It starts on March 21 at the Municipal Annexe, Dale Street. Anyone can attend.

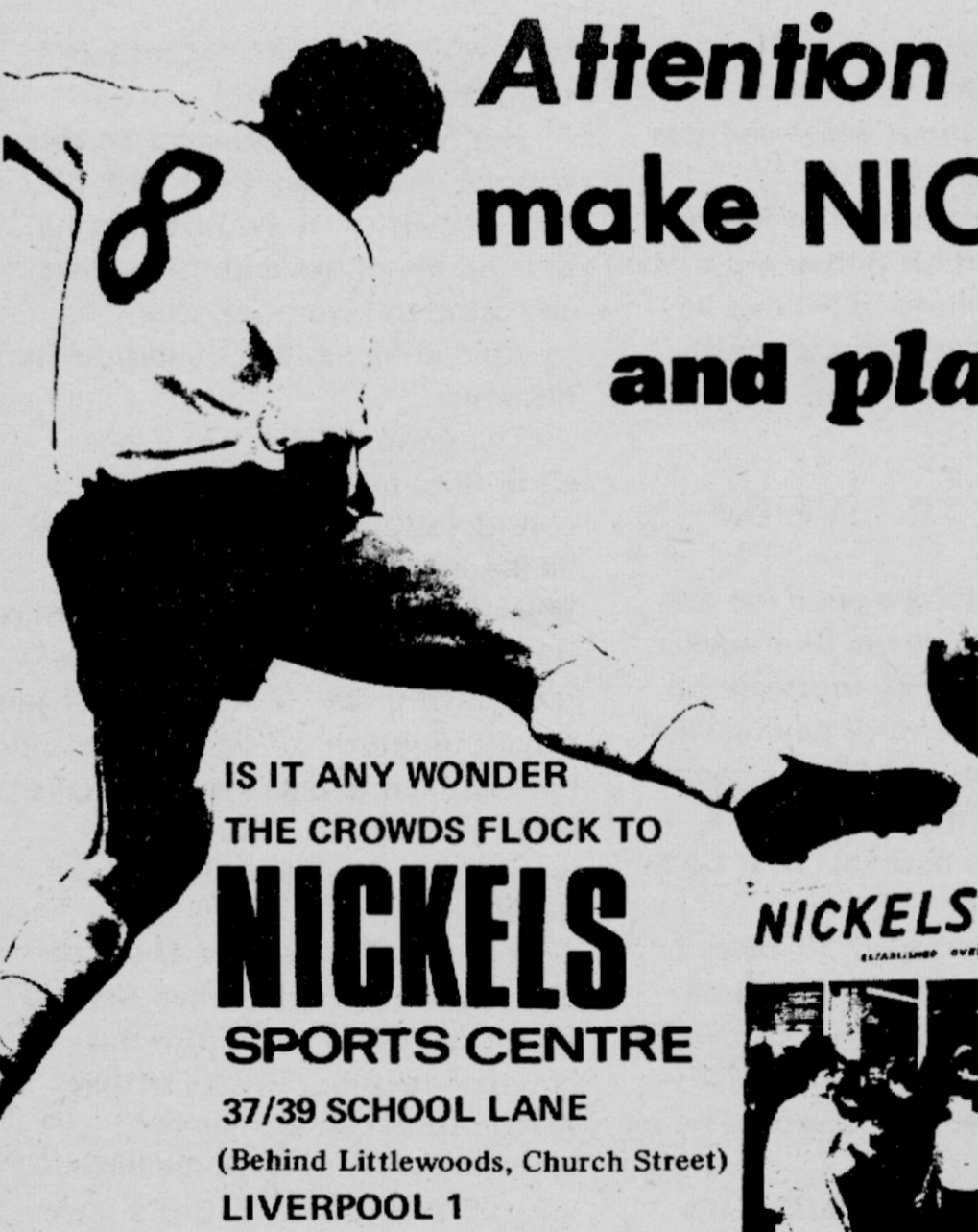
FOOTNOTE: Ald Meadows is a director of four companies - Lime Street Garages Ltd; Meadows Automobiles Ltd (garages in Prescot Road and Scotland Road); Liver Motor Finance Ltd (based at the Prescot Road garage); and Poston's Automobiles Ltd (garage in Hoylake Road, Moreton). The directors of Lime Street Garages are Ald Meadows and David Robert Meadows. The company was set up in 1925 and Ald Meadows became a director in 1945. There are two other shareholders: John Valentine Meadows and Mrs Christine Meadows.

TOP PEOPLE TAKE TO CRIMES

WITH ALL the recent publicity, you might think mugging is Britain's fastest growing crime. But the 'top people's crime' - fraud - is growing even faster.

Home Office figures for the first half of 1972 show that fraud offences rose by 13.6% to 45,632 (compared with crimes of violence against the person, up 11.3% to 23,706).

On the pornography front, discouraging news for Lord Longford. Our tidal wave of filth caused only 0.6% more sex crimes - well below the average rise in all crimes of 4.8%.



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