

BREAK FOR THE COMMERCIALS...

THEY'RE OFF! Liverpool's great commercial radio chase has begun. And with just a few days to go before the race ends, the big question is: Who is going to win the money-spinning franchise to set up a commercial radio station in Liverpool?

All entries have to reach the Independent Broadcasting Authority by October 26, but the results won't be announced until two months later.

Hot favourites to win the right to feed us with a daily diet of DJs and jingles is an interesting company called Sound of Merseyside.

Clearly the aim of all the competitors is to cash in on potential advertising revenue. But you don't win a radio franchise by stating your aims as bluntly as that.

Sound of Merseyside has been anxiously canvassing for support from Merseyside's

showbiz figures, from cultural and arts groups, and even from Liverpool Trades Council (who quite rightly ignored the offer).

Top catch was wealthy solicitor Sir Harry Livermore. He's a Labour Party stalwart, but more important, he's chairman of the Merseyside Arts Association. He took out 500 shares as trustee for the MAA. But Sir Harry... who shocked even people who knew him by accepting a knighthood from a Tory government... also seized the chance to demonstrate his Socialist principles.

He became a director of the company and obtained 1,000 shares for himself.

Almost as important a capture was Liverpool's astute comedian Ken Dodd, a major shareholder with 5,500 shares.

But behind this front are the real economic interests. They include the

Granada group (12,000 shares) — one of the most profitable TV and publishing companies.

Terry Smith, who runs Mercury Press, Merseyside's largest news agency, is the driving force behind the company. He has the largest number of shares... 15,000.

Then there's a whole host of newspaper groups including South Lancs Newspapers (10,000 shares); Swale Press, who produce Liverpool Weekly News (8,500), Cheshire and N. Wales Newspapers (2,000), and the Journal of Commerce and Shipping Telegraph (1,500).

Dark horse of the race is the Liverpool Daily Post and Echo. Still no news from them. But some years back they registered 21 'dormant' radio companies. And in 1971 the directors said: "We intend seeking participation in local radio."

The there's Manx Radio, "the oldest commercial radio station in the British Isles," who more than a year ago threatened invasion from across the sea. Could they be up to something as well?

Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, voice of the city's business interests, say they want a stake in the new station. But they're being very shrewd about it and refusing to buy any shares until they know who's won. That way, they're sure of having the media on their side.

● The editor of Granada's news programme 'Granada Reports' recently wanted to give the brush-off to Mercury Press Agency, who supply them with news. But he was told 'from above' that he couldn't do this.

The fact that Granada and the boss of Mercury Press are both major shareholders in Sound of Merseyside didn't, of course, influence the decision.

The garage that wants to be rid of Miss Collins

RESIDENTS of Deane Road, Kensington are increasingly concerned about the activities of the £2m garage empire blossoming on their doorsteps in the shape of B & K Motors.

B & K, registered in the Republic of Ireland, is one of Liverpool's faster-growing businesses. It has expanded from its Kensington base (which employs 120 people) in the last few years to take in a huge new motor auction room in Tuebrook, and showrooms in Wellington Road, Prescott Road (Old Swan) and Lowerhouse Lane (Norris Green).

Messrs Beggan and King are the men behind the initials and behind the purchase six months ago of three dilapidated properties in Deane Road.

Numbers 7, 9 and 11 Deane Rd stand immediately behind their own new £150,000 office development in Beech Street, which runs parallel to Deane Road.

The houses are not part of a new sideline for B & K. They contain only one rather sick and elderly lady, Miss Collins who does not want to move.

Mr King, who has been interviewed by Liverpool's Tenancy and Harassment Officer, grows indignant at the idea that Miss Collins is being coerced to leave.

In a letter to one of the residents Mr King says of Miss Collins' situation: "We are anxious that the lady concerned vacates it as soon as possible. We have at this

point of time offered her three alternative accommodations or a cash settlement, but I regret that we have made very little progress with her.

"When this does happen, it is out intention to apply for planning permission to erect an office and reception complex similar to that which has just been completed in Beech Street."

NO PLANNING PERMISSION

But several times this year in letters to residents the City Planning Officer has had this to say: "Should an application to erect garage premises be submitted the City Planning Officer would not be prepared to recommend to the council that planning permission be granted, for the reason that further intrusion of a non residential nature into this area would be wrong.

"However, should such a scheme be submitted proposing the conversion into flats, rehabilitation or residential development of the site, he would consider it appropriate and treat the scheme accordingly."

The Town Clerk has written a similar letter.

What, then, is the reason for B & K's expensive persistence in offering Miss Collins £500 to move and drawing up artists' impressions of what their new showrooms would look like?

Time, no doubt, will provide the answer.

WALLY & THE WAGE STOP

ALTHOUGH Social Security rates were increased this month, payments to some claimants — especially those with large families — will stay the same.

For if you're out of work and what you are supposed to get from supplementary benefit is more than what you used to earn — hard luck. You won't get what you're entitled to... you're on the wage stop.

The Social Security use the basic National Joint Council rates as a yardstick for the majority of wage-stopped claimants, although most people in employment actually earn above this rate.

This pernicious ruling is the focus of a national campaign by Citizens' Rights, Interaction and Liverpool's Check! rights centre, aimed at abolishing the wage stop.

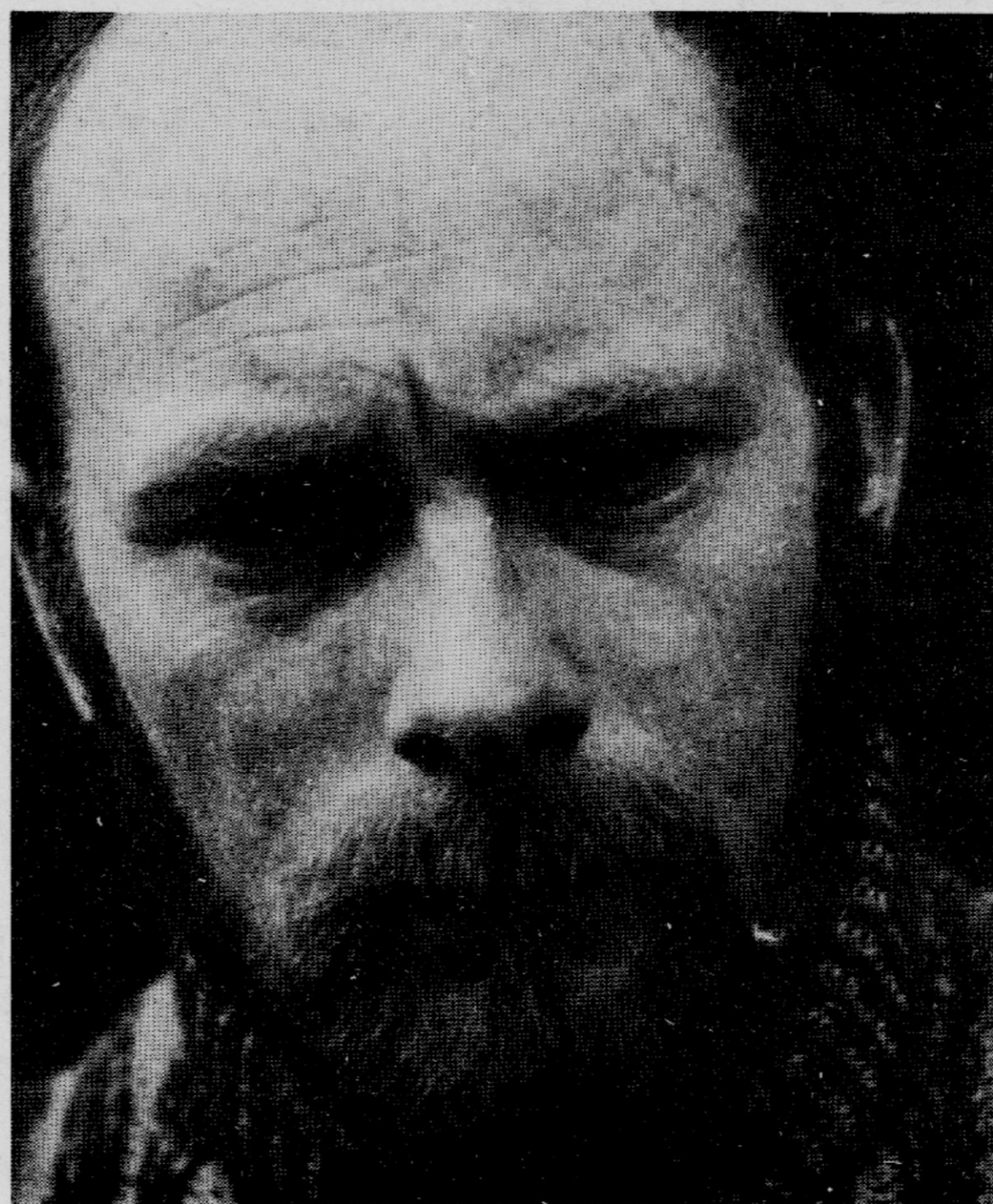
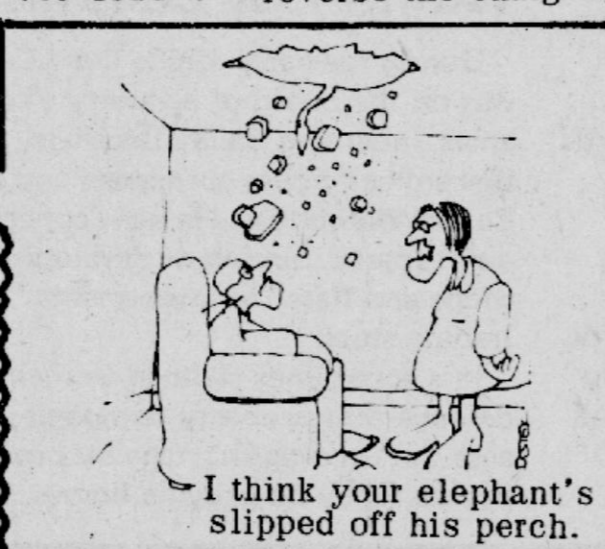
A strip cartoon "Wally and the H.L. APTED-MAY LTD. Estate Agents & Auctioneers Chapel Chambers, Heald Street. Garston, Liverpool 19 Require ARTICLES OF QUALITY for their regular auction sales. Highest prices obtained. Details 051-427 6494

Wage Stop" is to be distributed, together with a questionnaire.

The cartoon depicts the procedure two claimants go through in appealing against their wage stops.

Any claimant who is being wage stopped should consider an appeal. You may be able to argue that the wage stop should never have been applied, that you should not be required, due to illness, to register for work, or that the wage stop has been applied at the wrong rate.

For more details and advice on how to go about appeals contact: Check! Liverpool University Settlement, 2 Nile Street (Tel: 709 4811/2 — reverse the charges).



DAVID DUNN. In two weeks he received only £1.70 from the Social Security.

Roughing it on the welfare state

FOR THREE DAYS Mr David Dunn wandered aimlessly around the streets of Liverpool. He had nowhere to sleep and no money for food and drink.

In two weeks he received just £1.70 from the Social Security, and not surprisingly, lost a stone in weight.

When he needed help and support most he received obstruction and stone-walling from officials and welfare workers.

His story reveals large gaps in the welfare system, especially when a person is 'awkward' in the eyes of social workers.

His 'crime' was to refuse to go voluntarily into Ward 25 at Sefton General Hospital... the special psychiatric ward where people with mental illnesses can be forcibly kept for up to 28 days at a time.

David had a mental breakdown, brought on by family problems. The main reason for his mental state, he says, is that his wife (from whom he is separated) attempts to stop him seeing his children.

He was admitted to Ward 18 at Sefton General Hospital. After a while a psychiatrist came round, told him his bed was needed, and said he would have to go into Ward 25 to be treated.

Knowing the conditions in the ward, and certain that he would get better if he saw his children, David refused to go. Instead, he took his clothes and left. That was on a Thursday.

For the next three days he just "kept on walking and sleeping rough." He had no money, no possessions and no clothes except the working clothes he was wearing.

By Sunday he remembered a woman he knew and went to her home in Mozart Street, Toxteth.

By Tuesday... and still without any money... he was desperate for somewhere to stay, as there was no room in the friend's house.

He visited Grove Street Social Services Department and was told they weren't responsible for him, and that he would have to go back to see a welfare worker at Sefton.

At Sefton he was told the only places available were at the Simon Community or the Salvation Army hostel (which shows the lack of decent accommodation for single homeless men in Liverpool).

On the Wednesday he arrived at the Help and Neighbourhood Development Scheme's office in Kirkdale. There his case was taken up immediately.

But David still found it impossible to squeeze more than £1.70 out of the Social Security, although he was now having to wear borrowed clothes.

He was hard-up because just before his breakdown he had returned from North Wales, where he had been a garage mechanic, to Liverpool in a hired van. While he was in hospital the hire firm took back the van, with his clothes and motor tools worth £400 inside.

David visited Social Security offices in Garston, High Park St, and Kirkdale. At these offices he received numerous excuses about why they couldn't help him... he didn't have a settled address, couldn't prove his identity... and told him he was at the wrong office.

Morgan is alive and well



NEW EVIDENCE has come to light which proves that Alderman Joseph Morgan, Liverpool's Housing Chairman, is alive and well, but in hiding at his council flat, 5 Walton Park Gardens.

Earlier, journalists and council tenants had begun to fear the worst after repeated attempts to get in touch with the elusive alderman had failed.

But now Alderman Morgan has sent a letter to the Kirkby Reporter asking journalists not to telephone him at home. They should get in touch with Mr Graham Ireland, his housing information officer instead.

The trouble is that Mr Ireland is even more shy than Ald. Morgan. The journalist who annoyed Ald Morgan by ringing him at home had earlier tried to pounce Mr Ireland.

Ireland's secretary had answered and the journalist heard her whisper "It's the Kirkby Reporter." Then he heard Ireland whisper back: "Tell them I'm out."

Ald Morgan uses a similar technique himself (see Free Press 13). On answering the phone he says: "This isn't Alderman Morgan. It's his brother/brother-in-law/relative speaking."

One recent caller who heard the words: "This isn't Alderman Morgan..." didn't wait for the excuse — he simply said: "Ah. Then YOU must be Alderman Morgan's butler." Ald Morgan is not amused.

COUNCIL SHARES IN THE ECHO

NASTY RUMOURS circulated by some Labour councillors have suggested that various well known Liberals own shares in the Liverpool Echo.

The rumour (which appears to be untrue) must have caused great embarrassment to their Labour colleague Sir Harry Livermore, the wealthy solicitor.

Sir Harry owns 1,687 shares in the Echo and his wife has another 1,500.

One fact Labour councillors may have missed is this: Liverpool Corporation has a staggering 110,000 shares in the Echo. Labour has been in control for over a year now and has done nothing to get rid of them.

OUR NEW PHONE NUMBER IS 051-709 9460