

LIVERPOOL

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On the bonnie, bonnie banks of the Mersey...

MERSEYSIDE— Scene of Good Living. No, it's not a bad joke, but the title of one of Liverpool Public Relations Department's latest colour brochures.

On the cover is a peaceful river scene with some yachts. And if you think you've never seen the Mersey looking as blue as this, you're right. It's not the Mersey, but the Dee.

This lavish booklet is not meant to be seen by Liverpool people, though. It's to be used down south to entice immigrants here (nice white ones, of course, especially rising young executives from London).

One woman who came to live here is quoted in the booklet as blaming "the media, particularly television for distorting a picture of life in the north."

Television cameras may lie as much as they like, but our Public Relations Department are noted for their impeccable honesty. As they themselves say in the brochure: "The information contained herein is in no way exaggerated."

Contained therein is information on education and housing, among other things.

"Educational opportunities in the area are first class," the brochure proclaims. "Parents new to Merseyside may anticipate little difficulty in finding openings for their children to develop skills..."

Encouraging news for those of last year's school leavers whose only outlet for their skills is to sign their name once a week in the dole queue.

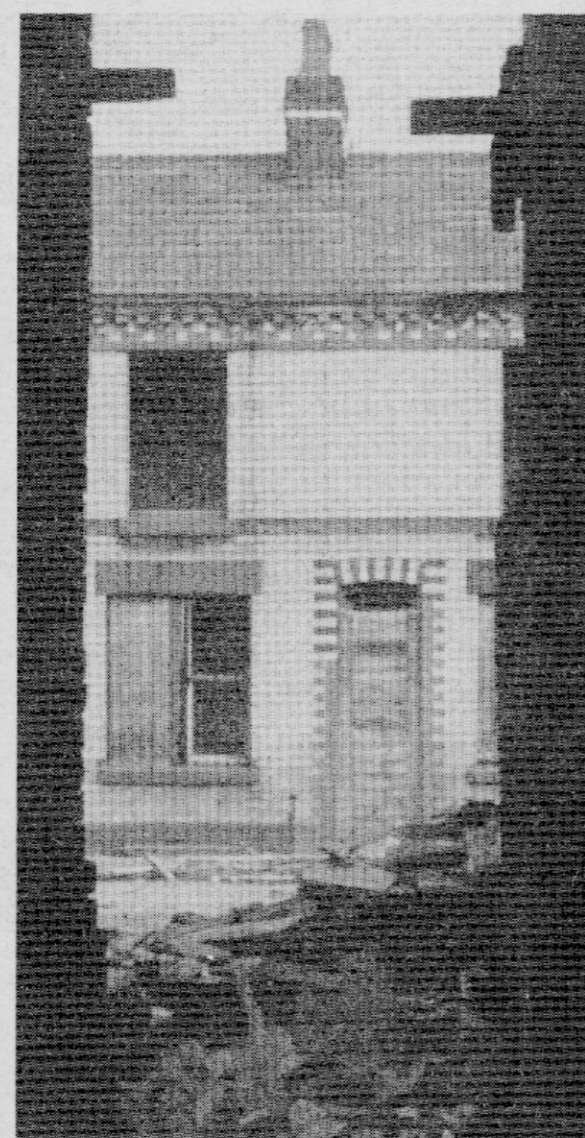
Housing, too, presents few problems. A colour photograph of a detached house is captioned: "There are numerous properties like this at prices which you can afford."

"Proof of the pudding is in the eating, to use a time-worn cliché," says the booklet. And the "proof" comes from a series of interviews with wives of executives who have come to Merseyside.

One of them is Mrs Bozena Grubb, whose husband is export sales manager for Meccano. The Grubbs live with their baby daughter, Amanda, in a spacious detached four-bedroomed house in Allerton.

The Grubbs are unfortunate enough to have two cars, which proved an "expensive nuisance" when they lived in London.

Mrs Grubb recently "sampled" the Liverpool hospital service and declared: "Private treatment was at least one quarter of the cost it was in the south-east."



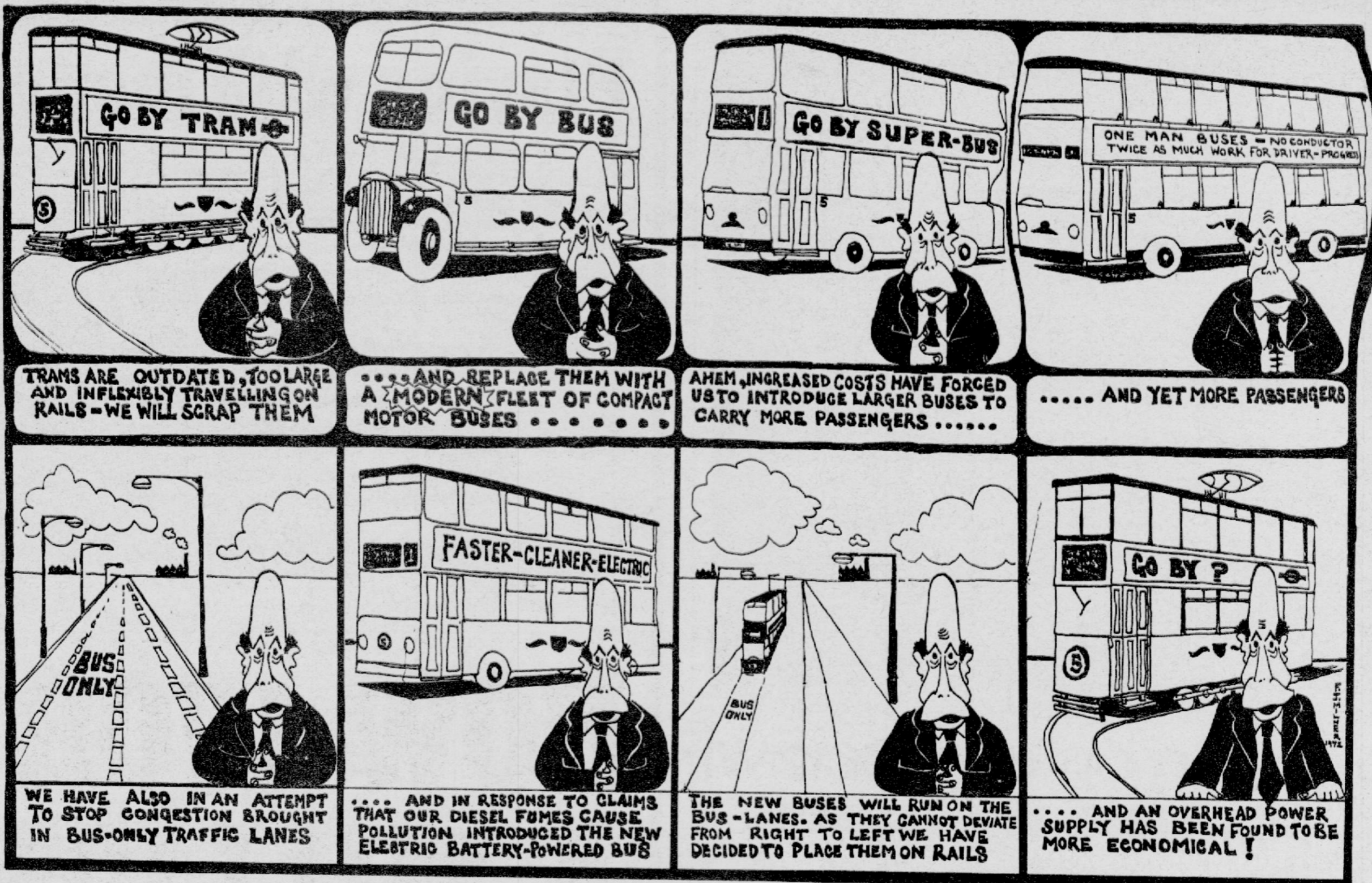
One view of Liverpool you won't find in any of the corporation's brochures.

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Tory's 'offensive trade' threatens new homes

FORMER Tory Alderman Leslie Sanders runs a business which is officially called "an offensive trade."

For years residents around his fat extraction factory in Brecon Street, Kensington, have been waiting for it to be demolished. This is not just because it causes obnoxious smells and fat-laden fumes.

The factory is surrounded on three sides by crumbling, boarded-up terraced houses. And the whole area from Sanders' factory to Bourne Street (between West Derby Road and Boaler Street) was due to be demolished under the city's development plan and replaced with new housing.

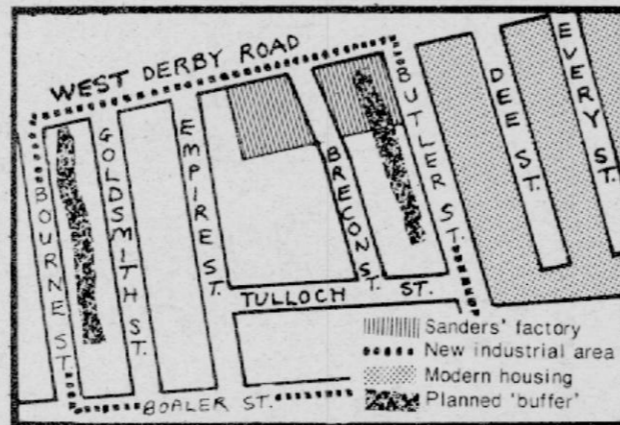
But now residents have been shocked to find that most of Sanders' factory may be reprieved, and the area used for industry. This would mean Sanders being allowed to expand rather than being forced to close or move elsewhere.

Unknown to most people, this decision was taken way back in February 1972 by the housing committee. Sanders resigned as chairman of the committee in March 1970, and although still a member, he declared his interest and did not vote when the change was made.

Two things have made residents livid over this re-allocation of the area from housing to industrial use.

Firstly, about 1,000 houses in an area from Kensington to just past West Derby Road are to be bulldozed down.

Residents say about 80% want to



stay in the area, but now a large chunk of available land (consisting of Sanders' factory and about 180 houses) will no longer be used for new houses. This means residents - and not Sanders - will be forced to leave the area.

Secondly, the factory is admitted to be a nuisance by the corporation as well as residents - and yet modern houses have already been built around the section now allocated to Sanders' factory and other industries.

In Every Street, just a few yards from one side of the factory there are maisonettes which are only about eight years old. Residents there have to put up with the foul smells... and they may have to for many more years.

The corporation plan, eventually, to put a landscaped 'buffer' on one side of the factory in Brecon Street and one at the other end of the new industrial area in Bourne Street.

But these buffers will do nothing more than hide the factory from view. Liverpool Environmental Health

Department realise that while the factory stays there is nothing they can do to make it completely inoffensive and acceptable to residents.

The department's report points out that as an "offensive trade" the factory has to receive the consent of the council each year and that public health inspectors visit the premises "regularly."

"Complaints have been received in the past concerning the storage of containers on the pavement in connection with the loading and off-loading of material, and the fouling of pavement and road surfaces due to the spillage of material," says the report.

"The odours associated with these premises arise during the heating of the material in an 'Iwel' fat extraction plant..."

Residents, who recently signed a petition asking for the whole area to be cleared and set aside for housing as originally planned, say Sanders' factory attracts flies and rats. But their main complaint is about the "fatty odours" which become "unbearable."

Why was Sanders' factory reprieved? Why was the development plan changed?

One reason given is that a compulsory purchase of the factories in Brecon Street would be "bloody expensive." It is suggested Sanders would ask £147,000 compensation.

Meanwhile, residents will be watching closely the future of the area... and Sanders' factory.

Move directly to jail... Do not pay £200

THERE'S A STORY going round the courts that some Liverpool householders take their annual holiday in the debtors' section of Walton Prison, instead of paying their rates.

And after talking to somebody who was there recently, we can understand why.

Last September the man offered to pay off his £200 rates demand at £1 a week, but the corporation said it wasn't enough.

When summoned to court in February he explained he could not pay more (he was out of work) and so he opted for 28 days in prison instead.

Now it costs about £140 to keep a man in one of our already overcrowded prisons for this length of time. And of course when he comes out the debt - £200 in this case - is considered paid.

So together the corporation and the state lose a total of £340... sounds like bad business.

Some towns issue stamps which ratepayers buy whenever they can afford them. Seems better than facing a huge bill once a year.



Property battle at Waterloo

A PLAN to build a 12-storey block of flats in Crosby has brought to light the many business interests of a well-known local politician.

The plan is the work of a little known voluntary housing group, the Pierhead Housing Society.

And one of the prime movers of the scheme is Frank Pritchard, a former mayor of Crosby and a big-wig in the local Conservative party. Until April 1 he was an alderman and a prominent member of the planning committee.

He is a director of six companies, including three property companies, is a senior partner in his family's own architect's practice, and is on the management committee of the Pierhead Housing Society.

Now housing associations and societies are not allowed to distribute profit to shareholders or members of the committee. But there is nothing to stop people on the committee collecting fees for work they do. So a number of these associations are mainly fee-generating bodies for professional people.

One of their advantages over property companies is that they rarely have trouble finding financial backing, as this can be provided by the government and local authority.

So, surprise, surprise! On the committee of Pierhead we find a solicitor, an accountant, a bank manager, an estate agent and an architect. The architect is Frank Pritchard, whose firm designed the flats - which would be worth several thousand pounds in fees.

If Pierhead's scheme is eventually approved, several shops in the area bounded by Dean Street, Wellesley Street and Bath Street in Waterloo would have to be demolished.

One of these is a small, but popular grocer's shop. Just before Christmas the shopkeeper found he had a new landlord... a property company called Coplehouse Estates.

Directors of this company are Frank Pritchard and Mr Harry Tweed, both on the Pierhead management committee. Quite what Pritchard and his friend are doing buying a shop which they know may be demolished

remains a deep mystery.

Pritchard certainly can't be accused of allowing a conflict between his business and political interests. When the scheme went before Crosby planning committee he was meticulously careful and declared his interest.

But Pierhead seem to have made several blunders which have so far delayed approval of the scheme. These mistakes are strange considering Pritchard's knowledge and experience of the planning process.

Firstly, Pierhead failed to publicise their plans extensively enough. Local regulations say schemes over 20 metres high must be advertised in local papers.

Secondly, Pierhead proposed a ludicrously high-density building. They allowed for only 17 car parking spaces for 66 flats and two shops. Pritchard, one would have thought, would have realised that Crosby planning department wouldn't accept this. They normally ask for one car parking space for each flat, plus an extra space for every three flats for

visitors. So the planning committee weren't able to pass the scheme.

Thirdly, Pierhead, becoming increasingly annoyed by the resistance shown by residents, decided to enlarge their scheme to provide more car parks and a lower density.

Originally they proposed to use some open space owned by the corporation, which is used as a playground by children from council flats nearby.

Under their revised plan Pierhead wanted to grab more of this land. However, this new plan would have totally obstructed a new road scheme for the area.

After a quiet word in their ear by the planning department Pierhead did not re-submit their scheme to the planning committee as expected.

And there the battle stands, with the residents leading on points.

The residents argue that the tower block of flats would not provide the type of housing needed in Waterloo and would overshadow a number of listed historic buildings, drastically altering the face of the area.