

# LIVERPOOL Free Press

No 16

SEPTEMBER 1974

5p

## GOOD RIDDANCE!

JAMES STANDFIELD WADE, one of the largest and most unpopular slum landlords in Liverpool has gone.

His Liverpool property empire is in the hands of a receiver and his 2,000 houses in the city are up for sale.

Two non-profit housing associations are hoping to buy them, and if the sale goes through it should eventually bring some relief to Wade's long-suffering tenants.

The associations are Liverpool Improved Housing and Liverpool Housing Trust, which (unlike some housing associations) pay no fees to committee members. They plan to buy Wade's houses jointly.

Wade came to Liverpool in 1970 when one of his firms, Hibernian, bought thousands of decaying houses from the notorious Realmdeal Investments.

Altogether he paid £1,241,000 and got 3,423 houses (half of them due to be demolished) and 4,866 freeholds. This was dirt cheap considering what he has sold some of them for since.

Realmdeal was part of the banking

## BIG CITY LANDLORD PACKS HIS BAGS

THE RISE AND FALL OF  
STANDFIELD —  
centre pages

firm London and County Securities. London and County helped Wade to buy their houses by lending him money.

Realmdeal continued to manage Wade's houses for a time, but eventually another of Wade's firms, Standfield Properties, took over.

Wade had an endless supply of ideas for making money. His main one was to increase rents and the value of houses with the aid of corporation improvement grants.

Despite this, his firms lost money and apparently had difficulty keeping up with the enormous mortgage repayments. And the improvements, started with little regard for the

well-being of tenants, soon ran into trouble.

Wade's backers, London and County themselves collapsed last December and their most famous director, Liberal leader Jeremy Thorpe resigned. (Their banking section has now been taken over by the First National Finance Corporation and the Bank of England.)

Under their new management London and County (A & D) continued lending to Wade's companies — the last time was in March this year.

But now they want their money back. On May 28 they brought in a receiver for three of Wade's companies: Standfield, Hibernian and Briman Properties.

Standfield are still advertising houses for sale, though they no longer offer mortgages. But it looks as though Wade's days as a landlord in Liverpool have gone for good.

## Fisher-Bendix millionaire is arrested

IVOR ('Ivor Million') Gershfield, the man who engineered the takeover of the IPD factory at Kirkby two years ago — and made £1 million in the process — has been arrested.

Gershfield, who spends most of his time in Switzerland, was nabbed by the City of London Fraud Squad during a visit to Britain. He was later released on £25,000 bail. The next court hearing is on September 21.

The charges (conspiracy to defraud) are not connected with the Kirkby deal but relate to earlier transactions.

The way Gershfield bought the old Fisher-Bendix factory and sold it to IPD (International Property Development) was described in Free Press No 15.

By a strange coincidence, on the day of Gershfield's arrest, Harold King (head of IPD) was also in London... announcing that the Kirkby factory had run out of cash. It's not known whether the pair had planned to meet.

Following the second workers' occupation of the factory in just over two years, a government takeover now seems almost certain.

The factory, which does engineering and fruit juice bottling, is run by a subsidiary of IPD and is at present in the hands of a receiver. Work has started again, however, with employees working a guaranteed minimum of four weeks out of six.

King remains as head of the parent company, though dealing in their shares has been suspended. He's now pinning his hopes for fortune on a housing project in the West Indies which is supported by large grants from the Trinidad government.

Having made what he still describes as "an undoubted success" of the Kirkby factory, King seems to have been contemplating a move into politics. Some time ago, according to well-placed sources, he hinted that if asked to stand as Liberal parliamentary candidate for Ormskirk he might not refuse. But so far there's no sign of him being asked.

## Not so keen

JIM KEEN, director of Liverpool Aero Club and Keen Air Services, and an active supporter of the campaign to keep Liverpool Airport open, will tell you how important it is to keep the services at Speke busy with work.

Mr Keen has a number of aircraft which need regular servicing, and there is an overhaul firm at Speke.

So where does he send his aircraft? — Why, Barton in Manchester, of course.

## WORST PUB IN NORTH-WEST?



TALK to a regular drinker about his local pub and he will probably argue that it's the best boozier in the city.

But talk to a regular at the Crown Hotel in Aintree and the chances are he'll tell you it's the worst pub in the North-West.

For 336 customers have signed a petition complaining of the lack of washing facilities for the bar staff; toilets in need of repair; flies in the public bar; lack of ventilation and fire exits and shabby, dirty conditions throughout the building.

The huge pub has a virtual monopoly in the area.

Two of the complaints have been seen to — fire exits and sinks have been installed. But if nothing is done about the rest, the committee — formed to ensure that all the complaints are dealt with — intend to employ a solicitor to oppose

renewing the brewery's licence on the grounds that they are unfit to run a public house.

Bass Charrington, the brewery responsible for the upkeep of the Crown, have promised to "take such action as may be necessary." A public health inspector has ruled that structural alterations will be needed to comply with regulations, and Labour MP Eric Heffer has promised his support.

Bass Charrington can well afford to do the place up — they had record profits last year of £57 million.

The licence is due for renewal next February, so the brewery have plenty of time to put their house in order. If they don't it may be the customers calling "Time, gentlemen, please!"

## Private patient becomes health panel chairman

A COMMITTEE supposed to represent National Health Service consumers and deal with their complaints have made a strange choice in their new chairman.

Mr Jack Rubin, the wealthy head of Tudor Estates, has just been elected chairman of the Liverpool Central-South Community Health Committee.

Mr Rubin doesn't use the Health Service himself — he goes privately, but says he knows what the service is like.

He was nominated on to the committee by the Merseyside Regional Health Authority.

## Time off at Dunlop's

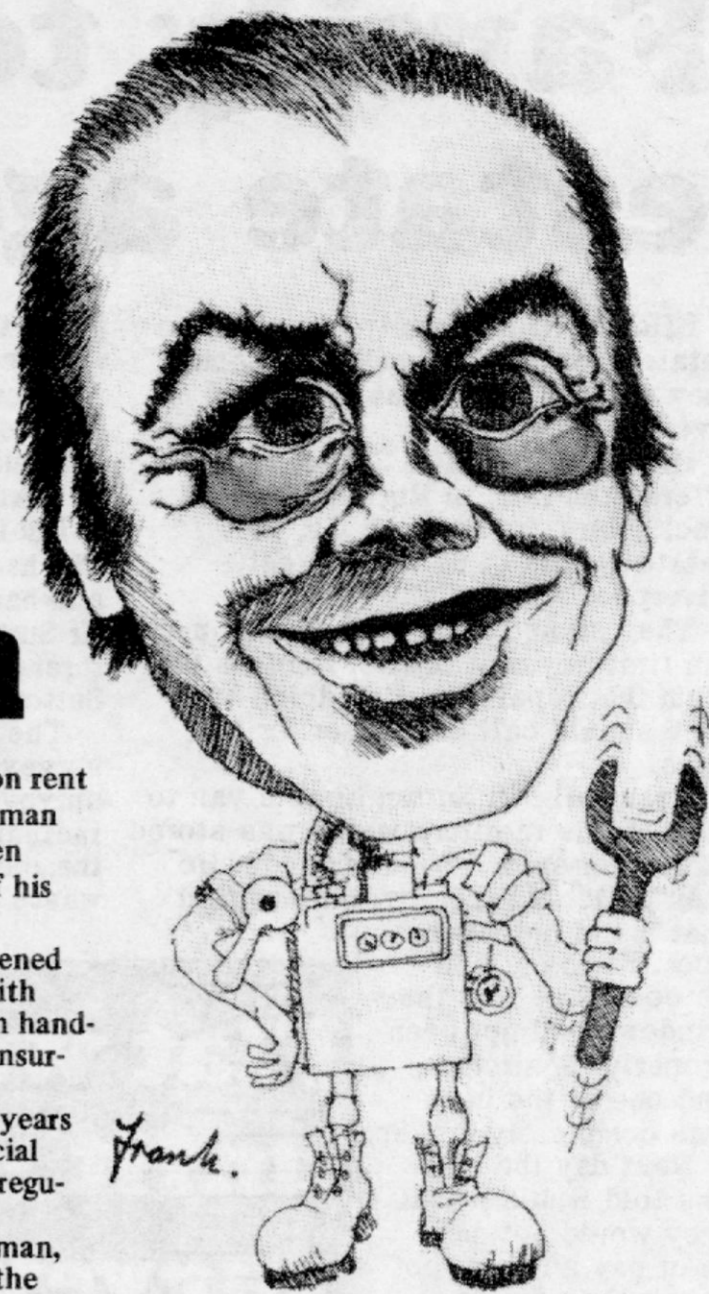
1,600 WORKERS at Dunlop's factory in Speke recently voted to work a 28-hour week, until the company are prepared to negotiate a shorter working week.

This unusual step was taken as a right under a Phase Three agreement in preference to a 7% increase in wages.

The men from the tyres and belting divisions have been working a 36-hour week since April 1 by taking time off the Friday night shift, which can interfere with their social life.

This shift now begins at 1 o'clock instead of 3 o'clock, and the company

## National Insurance inquiry into Smyth's old firm



COUNCILLOR Bill ("Get tough on rent arrears") Smyth, the Liberal chairman of the housing committee, has been having a few financial problems of his own.

For Smyth, who recently threatened to publish a blacklist of tenants with rent arrears over £100, hasn't been handing over his employees' National Insurance contributions on time.

And for the second time in two years the Department of Health and Social Security have had to investigate irregularities in his payments.

Before he became housing chairman, Smyth and his wife were running the Prime Heating and Plumbing Company.

Their employees regularly got letters from the DHSS claiming that their National Insurance contributions were not complete.

One man was told that in the year 1970-71 twenty week's insurance stamps were missing from his card. Responsibility for paying these rested with his employer — Smyth.

By February 1972 Smyth's contributions on behalf of his employees were in such a mess that the DHSS held a full-scale inquiry to try and sort it out.

Fortunately for Smyth, the DHSS did not publish a blacklist of employers with National Insurance arrears.

The amount of money involved was quite large. A look at the firm's accounts shows that in 1971 Prime Heating had set aside £2,474 as "provision for National Insurance claim."

In 1973 the DHSS again wrote to some of Smyth's employees to point out that their National Insurance cards had not

been renewed. The firm eventually stamped the cards and renewed them several months late.

The latest trouble began in April this year as a result of Smyth taking office as housing chairman.

Most of Smyth's work had come from two sources: Liverpool Corporation and the Gas Board. The firm had recently won £250,000-worth of contracts to modernise corporation houses. Because of these contracts Smyth could not continue to run Prime Heating while he was housing chairman.

So he decided to split the firm in two. Smyth and his wife resigned from the board of Prime Heating at the end of March. At the same time they became directors of another firm, Wavertree Heating and Plumbing.

This new firm took over the Gas Board work, while Prime Heating (now in the hands of David Stonestreet, a

(Continued on page five)

## Sorry! We don't pay claimants

LIVERPOOL CORPORATION seem to think that tenants on social security have a unique resistance to noise and disturbance.

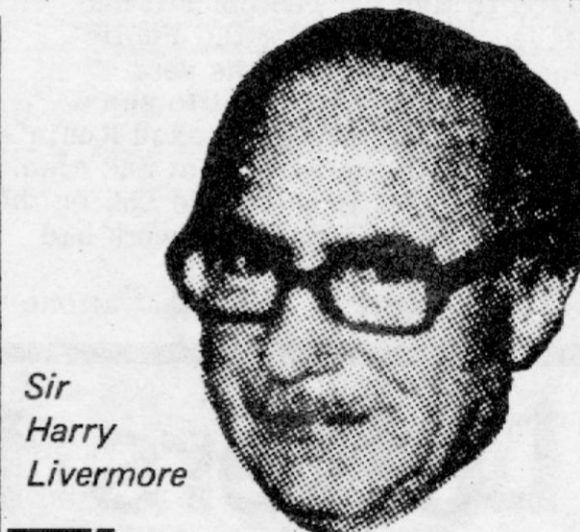
During modernisation, which takes about ten weeks, council tenants normally receive £2 a week compensation. But if they happen to be on social security they get nothing at all.

The corporation claim that if they compensated these tenants, the SS would in turn deduct it from claimants' benefits... so they don't bother paying.

This policy enables the social security to say — truthfully — "We have never taken the money off a claimant." And they add: "If we came across such a case we would, of course, do all we could to see that they were able to keep the money."

And there's the catch. The social security can happily say this, knowing that as long as the corporation's attitude persists they will never come across such a case.

At present no-one knows for sure whether the money would be deducted or not. Liverpool Trades Council's social services committee are trying to persuade the corporation to start making the payments so that there can be a test case with the SS.



Sir  
Harry  
Livermore

## The sound of money...

THE UNACCEPTABLE face of Sir Harry Livermore on the board of Radio City, our very own commercial radio station, has been joined by a familiar partner in speculation — the General and Municipal Workers' Union.

Livermore, a former Labour Lord Mayor, has 3,000 shares and the GMWU have a hefty 15,000.

Walter Aldritt, an old friend of Livermore, will represent the union on the Radio City board. He is a JP and Labour county councillor. For seven years he was MP for Liverpool Scotland constituency. He resigned to work for the union full-time.

In the past the GMWU have looked very favourably on Livermore's speculative projects.

In 1969 they lent £76,000 to Fawnoak Properties (of which Livermore is a director) to develop land in Gateacre.

In the same year the union also lent £25,000 to another of Livermore's companies, Dale Street Investments, to build what eventually turned out to be a casino in London Road.

These deals seem to have been nice and profitable, and no doubt both parties will make sure that some of the jungles from Radio City will be the sound of cash in their pockets.

## FREE PRESS 5p

WITH this issue the price of the Free Press is increased to 5p. This is entirely due to the shortage (and soaring price) of paper.

The Free Press is non-profit making and depends on voluntary labour. Since our appeal in the last issue we have several extra helpers, but more would be welcome. If you want to help, phone 227 2514 or write c/o 48 Manchester St., Liverpool 1 and we'll send you details of our meetings.