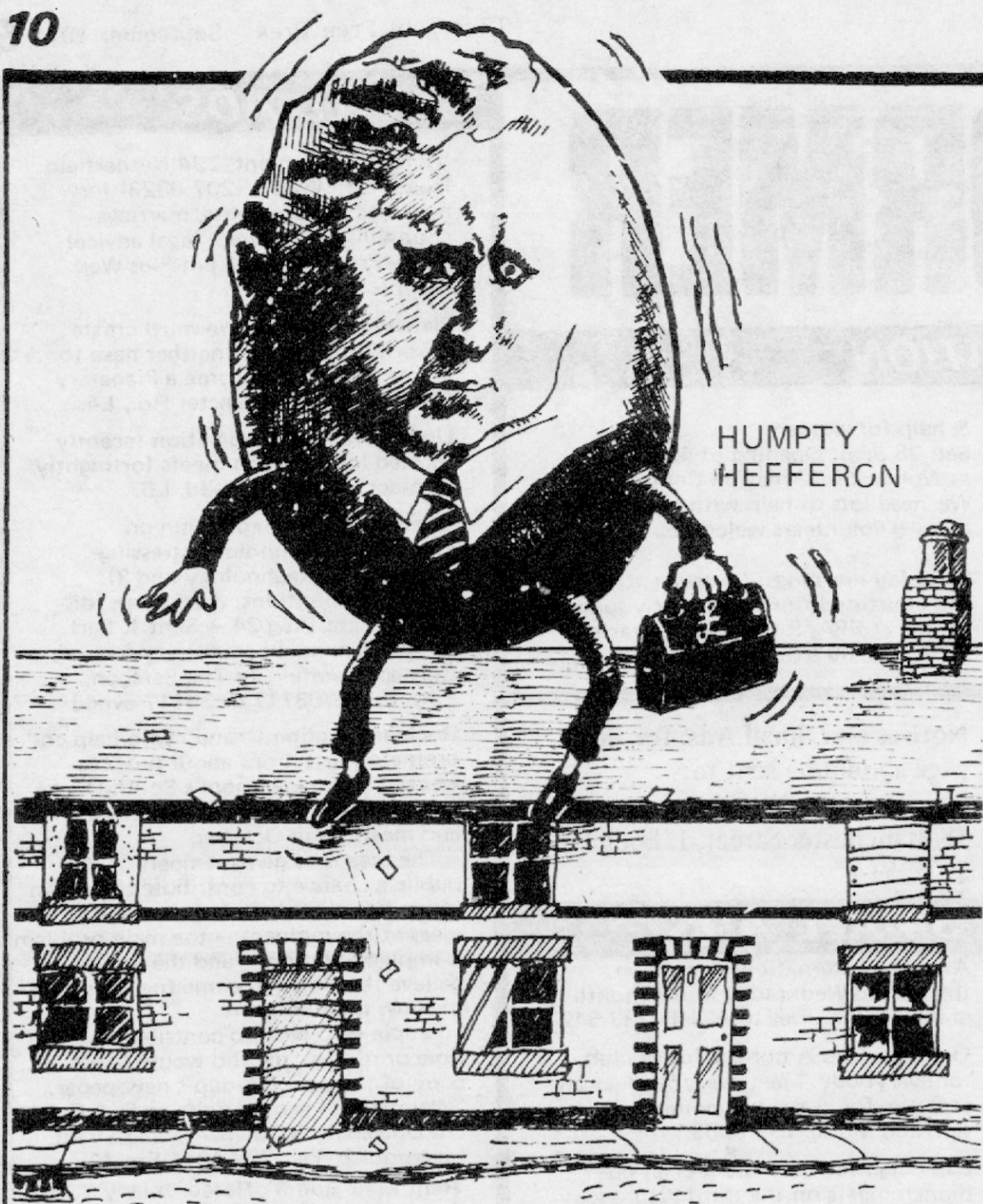


Police investigate as Hefferon topples



POLICE INQUIRIES into allegations against slum landlord and former Liberal councillor Michael Hefferon have now been going on for three months.

Meanwhile Hefferon has been pursuing inquiries of his own... at Liverpool housing department. He has made several visits to try and inspect the bulging file on his improvement grants. But the police have taken it away and seem intent on keeping it as long as possible.

Various firms of solicitors are enriching themselves in Hefferon's defence. Following his "trial by television" early in June, Hefferon has had a writ for libel sent to Granada Television. The writ is understood to have caused Granada's lawyer, Lord Goodman no loss of sleep.

Hefferon still talks occasionally of suing the Free Press who last October first brought his activities to light, but so far he has done nothing.

The case of Hefferon versus Her Majesty's Department of Health and Social Security - now well into its second year - is slowly approaching the final climax. It began in December 1972 when

National Insurance inspectors went to a house in Princes Avenue which Hefferon was having converted into flats.

The inspectors were looking for builders working on the "lump" and Hefferon prevented them from getting in.

Four days later the inspectors tried again, but Hefferon "escorted them out."

He was then charged with wilfully obstructing an inspector. In court Hefferon claimed the house was not business premises but a private dwelling house, and according to the law the inspectors had no right to go in. The stipendiary magistrate dismissed the case.

The Social Security appealed and the case went to the High Court. There the judges very sensibly decided that the house could not be a "dwelling house" when nobody was dwelling in it at the time.

They instructed the magistrate to reopen the hearing.

The Daily Post report of the case modestly described Hefferon as a "house-owner."

On the fashion front, mystery surrounds

the disappearance of Hefferon's chain of boutiques. Nova Fashions. All four shops have suddenly been abandoned.

The shop on Allerton Road still has posters in the window urging people to vote for Cyril Carr. This is ironic considering it was Carr, who after much dithering, very reluctantly pushed Hefferon off the council.

Many people have been puzzled that when the Daily Post asked Hefferon to comment on his resignation he appeared not to know he had resigned. "This is news to me," he said.

The explanation is simple. Many weeks earlier, Cyril Carr asked Hefferon to write a letter of resignation, which was to be undated. Hefferon did so.

Carr resisted demands from his own party for an inquiry and did nothing more until he heard that World in Action were preparing a very damaging half-hour documentary on Hefferon.

Carr then handed in the undated resignation so that Hefferon would no longer be a councillor when the programme went out.

KIRKBY SKI SLOPE SCANDAL



Kirkby's slippery ski slope. If you don't stop in time at the bottom there's a good chance of a ride on the roundabout.

Council like it - so kids lump it...

TO ENHANCE Kirkby's world-wide reputation as a tourist resort, with such attractions as the highest rate of unemployment and the newest derelict houses in the country, the council decided that all the town needed was a £90,000 ski slope.

It must be to attract tourists because not many of the residents could afford to use it.

The story began a few months before Kirkby was due to be taken over by the new Knowsley authority. There was competition amongst councillors and bureaucrats to find the most ridiculous way to spend all the money in the coffers before Knowsley got its hands on it.

The winner was Mr E Spencer Stevenson (now architect to Knowsley District Council) who thought of a ski slope.

Work on Stevenson's monster began last November, and the main contract was awarded to Leatherbarrows, the Kirkby building firm.

The contract was awarded personally by that well-loved councillor Dave Tempest, using his 'delegated powers' as chairman of the General Purposes Committee.

Why Councillor Tempest made such an important decision without consulting the full council is a

mystery.

Unfortunately the council neglected to apply for planning permission, and this was not finally granted until March 5 - four months after work had begun. Mr Stevenson explained: "We mistakenly thought the ski slope was within the boundary of our stadium. If it had been we would not have needed permission."

This apparently means Mr Stevenson didn't know where his brain-child was being built. A good look at a map would also have shown that it was being built over a water main carrying supplies from Liverpool to Kirkby. So if anything goes wrong residents of Kirkby may in the future be faced with the choice of having a drink of water or going for a ski.

It was later discovered that Kirkby council had built the slope on land which did not belong to them. It belonged to Liverpool Corporation and Kirkby are now buying it for £2,750.

In the last week of March people in Kirkby's corridors of power started worrying that the great white elephant might not be finished before the money ran out on April 1.

The obvious answer was slave labour. It built the pyramids for the

Pharaohs, so why not a ski slope for Kirkby?

A few phone calls later the headmaster of Brookfield Comprehensive School asked his assembled pupils for volunteers to work on this great project during school time. Some kids, with the thought of a few days off school, volunteered.

They soon got fed up with the hard and dangerous work laying plastic matting, for which they didn't get paid.

When the headmaster called for more volunteers at the weekend the response was not so enthusiastic until he said they would be paid £5 for the weekend. The kids worked from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday for a lousy fiver, with no insurance contributions paid - 25p an hour.

In spite of the 'volunteers' the ski slope was not completed on April 1. On April 8 it was reported that it would be opening in a few weeks. It didn't, and it still hasn't.

According to the architect's office it will open "when the staff is available. According to Mr Alan Pearson, the Chief Community Services Officer, "It should have been ready now, but there's been a snag with the insurance company over the back rails - you know - so nobody would fall off the back."

The cost of fitting these safety rails is £7,000. Anyone who doesn't fall off the back and goes down the right slope has a good chance of crashing through the fence at the bottom on to the main road.

-COLIN McFAY

NAGROM? - THAT'S MORGAN BACK TO FRONT

LABOUR councillor Joe Morgan is noted for his shyness. But his latest ruse to avoid publicity has gone a bit too far. For he's taken to spelling his name backwards.

MORGAN written back-to-front spells NAGROM... and Nagrom is the name Joe has given to the company of which he is a director.

Joe and his wife took over the company in September 1972, a few months after he became Liverpool's housing chairman. At that stage its name was Meols Building Co, and it had been inactive for some time.

Joe immediately moved its registered office from plush Rodney Street to his council flat in Walton Park Gardens and began trading shortly afterwards.

Council tenants are not supposed to run businesses from their flats. But fortunately for Joe the rule is not strictly enforced, so there was no need for him - in his capacity as housing chairman - to take steps to evict himself.

Early last year the firm moved again. This time to the office of Joe's accountants at 11-13 Victoria Street. The name was also changed to Meols Building and Industrial Cleaning Co.

The latest change of name - to Nagrom - seems to have been provoked by another Labour councillor, Wilfred P. Johnson, who set up a company called Meols Industrial Cleaning Co. To add to the confusion, its address was also 11-13 Victoria Street.

For a time one of the directors of Morgan's company was "Mary Salla" of 362 Princess Drive. The address is that of Councillor Johnson, and Mary is the name



Joe Morgan - avoiding publicity

of his wife. She resigned from Morgan's company last December.

Neither Nagrom nor Meols Industrial Cleaning appears to be on the telephone, and when we asked other industrial cleaning firms about them, they said they had never heard of them.

But if you happen to see either of these these would-be capitalists off to work with a mop and bucket, do let us know.

● Councillor Morgan has not declared any company interests in the council's public register.

Army 'coup' in Bootle

AFTER Liverpool Show, Lime Street, Williamson Square and Scotland Road it's time for the people of Bootle to play host to the great travelling Army show.

Not content with conniving with Liverpool council to get the people to pay for their recruitment extravaganza, they've repeated the coup (oops!) in Bootle.

From September 6-8 there will be a tattoo at Bootle Stadium. When this was being arranged earlier in the year, the army asked Sefton council to provide crash barriers, toilets and so on.

The Amenities Committee complied but sent the army a bill for £1,350. The army reluctantly agreed to pay £400 and suggested the council make an entrance charge at the tattoo to recoup the rest. This was agreed at a council meeting on July 9.

At this same meeting the various council committees were told there would be no money available for new schemes. If committees wanted to support anything new, then money should be diverted from current projects. They were also told the treasurer would welcome ideas on possible economies.

This ban on new expenditure has

prevented modernisation of the Peel Road playground in Bootle. The housing department recently conducted a survey among Rimrose Road estate residents to see whether they wanted a new playground. Of the 58% who replied, most said yes. But once more that lack of money got in the way.

So it seems that Sefton council are prepared to run a risk of £950 to subsidise army recruiting but they aren't prepared to spend money on their kids. -FRANK KEELEY

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