

Another land deal on Wilson's doorstep

THE PROPERTY MAN at the centre of the 'slag heaps' affair has pulled off another remarkable land deal, this time in Harold Wilson's own constituency.

The land this time is the site for an office block in Kirkby town centre. At the time Kirkby was an important part of Wilson's constituency.

Building work on the office block is just starting.

The "reclamation" of slag heaps near Wigan — which caused a political storm last year — was intended to line the pockets of some of Wilson's closest associates: Mrs Marcia Williams (now Lady Falkender) and her brother, Mr Tony Field.

Involved with them (apart from the ill-fated Ronald Milhench) was Mr Philip Moore Clague, a property developer from the Isle of Man.

This is the man who has fixed up a second amazing deal close to Wilson.

The deal involves a lease of land from Kirkby Council to Mr Moore Clague's company, Amalgamated Land (GBM) Ltd.

Playing a prominent part in the negotiations was council leader Dave Tempest, a close associate of Wilson locally, and an immensely powerful

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figure in Kirkby. Prime Minister Wilson gave him the OBE in the 1969 Birthday Honours.

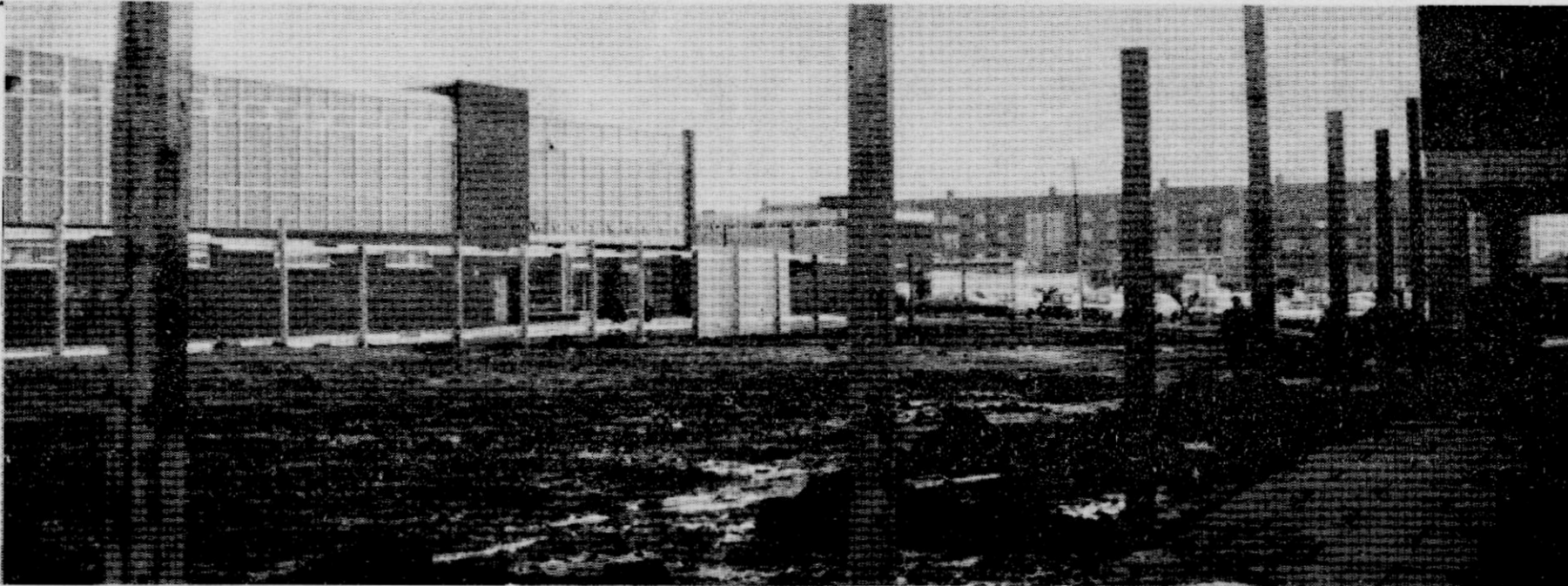
There are several curious features about the Kirkby land deal. Features which benefited the well-connected Mr Moore Clague:

- The terms of the lease are extremely generous.
- The land was never put out to tender — Moore Clague somehow got it without competition.
- The council handled the deal in an unusual way — it was not discussed in committee.
- After three years playing the big developer, Moore Clague suddenly announced he was only the 'Project Manager' for the Norwich Union Life Insurance Society.
- The developers already think they have a tenant — the local council.



RIGHT: Work is just starting on the office block site in Kirkby.

ABOVE, RIGHT: Council leader Dave Tempest having a friendly chat with Wilson at Kirkby in 1970. Wilson has always taken a close interest in the town, but especially when in opposition from 1970 to 1974. In 1972, for instance, he was making visits there — often private visits — at least once a month. Tempest, a fellow Yorkshireman, is a close associate of Wilson locally. The Premier gave him the OBE in 1969.



Death case PC 'was in earlier attack'

ONE OF THE police officers who arrested Kenny Williams had previously been accused of an unprovoked attack on an arrested man.

Williams died last August, shortly after being arrested. But before his death he said he was viciously beaten in a police Land Rover.

One of the men in that Land Rover was Constable James Peter Finegan from Copperas Hill Police Station.

Finegan, who lives at 14 Shavington Avenue, Oxtou, Birkenhead, has since been moved to St Ann's St.

In October 1971, Finegan helped to arrest another young man in Liverpool city centre. Brian Egerton, from Bootle, also accused Finegan

and others of assaulting him.

His story was horrifyingly similar to that told by Kenny Williams.

Like Williams, he said he was forced to lie on the floor of a police vehicle while police stamped on him.

Finegan, he claimed, punched him and twisted a finger permanently out of joint.

At the police station, Brian Egerton says, his complaints were ignored and he was beaten up again. Williams said exactly the same thing.

An internal inquiry was also held into Brian Egerton's allegations.

No action was taken against Finegan or anyone else.

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Councillor accused of stealing taxi plate

LIBERAL Councillor Carl Crawford has been charged with the theft of a taxi-cab plate.

He pleaded not guilty and was remanded by magistrates until April 1.

The police say Councillor Crawford "did steal a hackney carriage plate valued at £20, the property of Ronald Richardson, on or about December 22."

Crawford, a Liberal member for Fairfield, is the owner of Eagle Taxis, one of the largest private-hire firms in the city.

The case will be watched especially closely because it is set against a backdrop of considerable friction between taxi owners and drivers, councillors and some private-hire operators.

Hackney owners and drivers have

been concerned at the way the Liberal controlled council has increased the issue of hackney plates and licences.

They fear their livelihoods will be threatened if large numbers of private-hire men obtain hackney plates from the corporation.

Hackney men are also eagerly awaiting the outcome of another court case involving Councillor Crawford. This is due to be heard at the Appeal Court in London, but there has been a delay of about 12 months since the case appeared in the Crown Court.

This case involves charges relating to the use of hackney cabs as private-hire vehicles.

The corporation have said that under the 1972 Liverpool Corporation Act it is illegal for private-hire oper-

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MINISTRY: 'FIRE THE CLEANERS, NOT THE MISSILES'

AT A SPECIAL CEREMONY on February 7, thirty-five Liverpool women were recognised for their services to Her Majesty. They received the Order of the Boot.

Their work... at the Ministry of Defence offices, was to wage war on Britain's oldest enemy — dirt. For two-and-a-half hours a day, five evenings a week... in some cases for as long as ten years... they swept floors and stairs, dusted desks and filing cabinets.

Their crime... they joined a trade union.

The Ministry, anxious to cut its £3,000,000,000-a-year budget, and with thousands of missiles to choose from, chose instead to see its own cleaners fired.

The cleaners — all members of the Civil Service Union — have been replaced by a smaller number of non-union women earning lower rates of pay.

Cleaning at the Ministry in Mersey House and Moor House is done by outside contractors. The contract goes out to tender once a year.

Sometimes the contractor is changed, but when this happens, the women are normally re-employed by the new firm.

For the past year the women have worked for Office Cleaning Services. Several months ago they joined the union, and the firm agreed that their tender for the 1975 contract would be based on union rates (top rate £8.15 a week).

OCS lost the contract when a rival firm, Industrial Contract Cleaners, put in a lower tender based on non-union rates.

When the OCS contract expired this month, 27 women in Mersey House and eight in Moor House got their cards. The new firm, ICC, then broke with normal practice by refusing to employ the women. They took on a new work-force of about 20, and are paying about £6 a week.

ICC have had the contract before. "Why the Ministry gave them the contract back I'll never know," said Mrs Nellie Dillon, who cleaned at the Ministry for ten years and was supervisor for seven.

"We had trouble before with this firm. We couldn't get a rise off them."

Eventually the women went on strike for two nights and got a rise of about 75p a week.

One woman did manage to keep her job when ICC took over this time. She's the one who works during the day cleaning toilets. People who'll do that for £14 a week are, it seems, hard to find.