

Councillor in court

(Continued from page one)

ators to use vehicles which - because of the make and design - lead people to mistake them for taxi-cabs.

Hackney men are upset that Crawford is legally free to continue hiring out these cabs until the case has been finally decided.

Relations between the council and the taxi men haven't been made easier by the activities of another Liberal Councillor... Tim Morton, also a member for Fairfield.

He has been using an unlicensed, unprinted, Hackney Cab for private-hire for two years. He hires the radio from his Liberal colleague, Councillor Crawford.

Morton hasn't even got a private-hire licence. This is because the corporation won't give him a private-hire licence for a hackney cab.

Certainly Councillor Morton knows the rules inside out. He should do. He's a member of the Highways and Environment Committee which is responsible for regulations concerning taxi and private-hire vehicles.

About the middle of February, five taxi drivers became so annoyed by this blatant breach of the regulations - and the complete failure to enforce them - that they took matters into their own hands.

A call went out on their radios that Morton's unprinted taxi, number YOY 569G, was nearby. The chase began. Morton's cab was surrounded, forced to pull in, and his tyres let down and the valves removed.

Knowing he was in the wrong, Morton couldn't blame the taxi drivers.

"I'd rather you didn't push the issue," he told a reporter. "I see their point of view... and being a councillor makes things rather difficult."

"The trouble is I have been working a hackney carriage as a private-hire vehicle for two years."

And he added: "I don't want to continue bending the law. I know what I'm doing is wrong, which causes these people to do nasty things."

Councillor Morton explained that he had been using a Mercedes for private-hire, quite legally, for seven years.

Then two years ago he read that more hackney plates were going to be issued. So he sold the Mercedes, bought a cab, and was stuck because he couldn't get a licence.

Finally Councillor Morton said: "I don't think the publicity would do me any good. If I thought the publicity was going to benefit me at a later stage, I'd take your phone number and give you a ring."

Wonder what sort of journalists he's used to speaking to?

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CONSPIRACY CASE

Letters to accused are intercepted

LETTERS - posted to a Liverpool man accused of conspiracy - are being intercepted and opened.

Frank Keeley is one of fourteen pacifists charged with conspiring to seduce troops from their allegiance to the Queen.

Since the middle of January, at least five letters sent to Frank have failed to arrive. One was from his solicitor, one from the Defence Group in London and another from the Defence Group in Manchester. Two letters from his cousin have also vanished mysteriously in the post.

A tax rebate did arrive, though the envelope had been ripped open. It had been stuck together again with sellotape and a scribbled note said: "Envelope damaged by sorter 6/2/75".

On learning of this, the Free Press sent Frank a specially prepared letter. Inside an ordinary white envelope was a light-proof bag containing undeveloped photographic film.

If the letter arrived unopened, the film could be developed and a picture would appear. If it had been opened, the film would turn out black. If someone realised the trick and substituted fresh film, there would be no picture.

We posted the letter - First Class - at 4.30 p.m. on February 13.

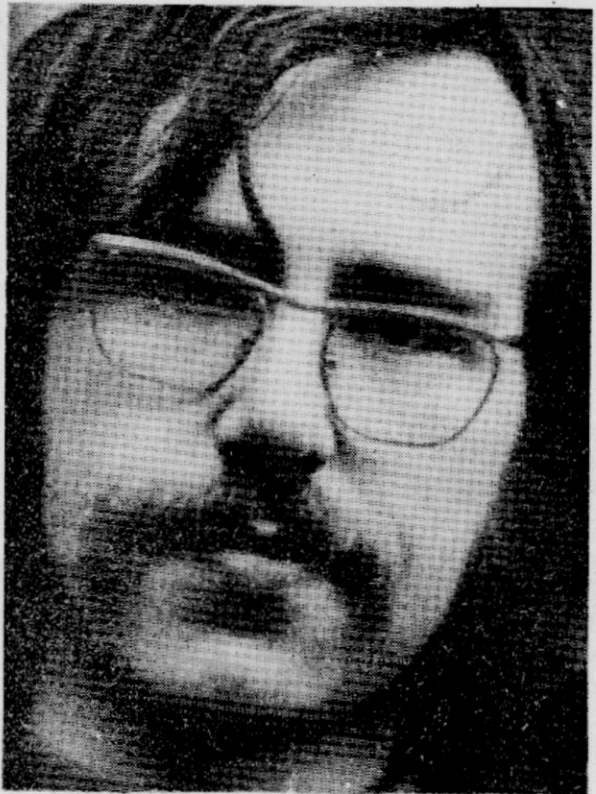
It did not arrive next day. But on February 15, Frank Keeley got two letters.

One was our own white envelope. Close scrutiny showed it had been slit open at one end and skilfully resealed with an unusual type of glue.

The film was inside, but the light-proof bag had disappeared.

The other letter was a large brown envelope with a smudged postmark. Frank opened this mystery envelope and was astonished.

Inside was the missing light-proof bag! And clipped to the bag were two



FRANK KEELEY - Some letters were opened, others disappeared.

pieces of paper.

One was a photocopy of what looked like a printed letter-head. It had the Royal Coat of Arms and the words "Ministry of Intelligence Department Six."

The other piece of paper was a photocopy of a message, very carefully hand written in capitals. It said: "I wonder if you'll get the same as Daly? He was too hot as well. Still that's your funeral."

On the back it said: "Two of your 'friends' have blood on their hands. Have they told you?"

It is unlikely that the "letter-head" is a genuine Government document. But it is difficult to see who, other than some official intelligence department, would have the opportunity or the desire to interfere with mail in this way.

We suspect that what happened was

this: the letter was opened, probably officially, and whoever opened it spotted our trick. They then made up a letter-head, using Letraset to give it a "printed" appearance (the lettering is slightly crooked).

This would be a protection against embarrassing questions. They could simply say: "There is no Ministry of Intelligence. The document is a crude forgery."

The other piece of paper is more interesting. "Daly" - we eventually discovered - is probably a reference to Tim Daly, a poet who got a long jail sentence several years ago for a protest in which he tried to burn down the Imperial War Museum.

His case was not widely reported outside the pages of Peace News. The most avid readers of back numbers of Peace News at the moment are the Special Branch.

They are trying to collect evidence for the conspiracy trial. One of the Peace News editors is among the fourteen accused, and several articles from the paper are expected to be used as evidence by the prosecution.

The charges arose after leaflets entitled "Some Information for Discontented Soldiers" were distributed at army barracks near Oswestry last August.

The leaflets were produced by the British Withdrawal from Northern Ireland Campaign (BWNIC), whose supporters say there can be no military solution to the problems of Northern Ireland and demand the withdrawal of British troops and an end to the union.

Committal proceedings are due to start at Lambeth Magistrates' Court on March 3, and are expected to last two weeks.

The actual trial could begin in June, but October is thought more likely.

'Missing' man appeals

A YOUNG MAN was tried at Liverpool Magistrates Court... although he wasn't present.

In his absence Paul Ambrosius, from Toxteth, was found guilty of using obscene language and fined £20.

The date of the trial was January 3. His solicitor turned up to court on January 4, and Paul turned up on January 5, the day originally set for the case. The police somehow forgot to tell Paul the case had been brought forward.

But this is only part of an extraordinary story about events which followed an attempt to make a complaint against the police.

At the retrial Paul was again found guilty but his fine was reduced to £5.

Paul will appeal. He believes the police concocted their evidence; that two independent witnesses supported him.

The story begins way back on October 23. Paul and his friend, Jimmy

Rogers, 33, the Liverpool Community Relations Officer responsible for youth work, left the YMCA on Mount Pleasant at 10.15pm after playing basketball.

They had a meal then walked past Hardman Street Police Headquarters about 11pm.

Jimmy Rogers says he glanced towards the door and heard a policeman say: "That's all you can expect from niggers."

Both Jimmy and Paul walked into the station to ask the Sergeant (No. A4) why he had made the remark.

As a result of this Paul, not the sergeant, was accused of using obscene language.

In court the sergeant told a tale which came as a complete surprise to Jimmy and Paul.

He said that as he was going past the Philharmonic Hotel to begin duty

he positively identified Jimmy Rogers who was surrounded by a group of black kids.

Jimmy, he said, was shouting and swearing. The sergeant claimed he said "Good evening, Mr Rogers."

Later, he told the court, Jimmy Rogers came into the police station with Paul in a very excited state.

But Jimmy wasn't the one charged with using obscene language in the street. Only Paul was - for using obscene language in the police station.

Jimmy Rogers claims he could not have been picked out by the sergeant - they had never met as the policeman claimed.

Both Paul and Jimmy have made a complaint about the sergeant's behaviour and his remark about "niggers"

Jimmy used to train the police basketball team and frequently lectures police officers about police-community relations.

Why David lost £100

DAVID CRONE should never have been in court. The judge said there was no evidence on the charge against him.

For Mr Crone it was the end of months of anxiety. But the case had cost him two weeks in Risley Remand Centre, and more than £100 in lost wages. He will receive no compensation.

It began when two masked men tried to rob a post office in Warrington. The would-be robbers were chased away empty-handed by the 64-year-old postmaster and made their getaway in an 8 year old Vauxhall Viva with only two gears working.

The car belonged to Mr Crone's wife. Mr Crone had lent it to a man who was staying in their home, so he could collect his social security.

The police arrested the lodger and were looking for the second man.

Mr Crone was taken into St Anne Street police station.

There, he said in a statement, he was beaten on the face and back by a policeman who boasted "that there were several men walking around Liverpool with only one kidney functioning after having been left alone with him."

"He then told me that if I did not admit to having helped plan the robbery, he would bring a charge of assaulting a police officer against me."

It was under this sort of pressure, says Mr Crone, that he eventually signed a "confession" which was untrue.

Later a third man was arrested. So in the end three men appeared at Che Chester Crown Court accused of a crime which, according to witnesses, only two had committed.

They were charged with assault with

intent to rob. Mr Crone's ex-lodger and the third man were jailed for five years each.

Mr Justice Mais, instructing the jury to find Mr Crone not guilty, said there was no evidence to suggest he had loaned the car knowing violence was to be used.

This annoyed Mr Crone. He had hoped the court would clear his name. But the judge, in declaring him innocent of this charge, seemed to imply he was guilty of something else.

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OFFSHORE NOTES



BY OIL SLICK

THE OFFSHORE oil bubble has moved a little nearer home with the announcement by Gulf Oil that they are to start drilling in Liverpool Bay this spring.

Altogether the firm have exploration rights in five blocks of the Irish Sea between north-west England and the Isle of Man.

But before we welcome them with open arms it's worth taking a closer look at Gulf Oil...

They hire supertankers from a Monrovia-based subsidiary of National Bulk Carriers. One of these ships, 'Universe Leader' unfortunately developed a leak while unloading in Bantry Bay, Eire.

Such a leak is unlikely to affect Gulf's profits, which have attracted the attention of the U.S. Federal Energy Administration who have accused Gulf of profiting from illegally inflated oil prices.

But the leak has caused some embarrassment to the Eire government, who belatedly admitted that they had allowed Gulf to operate in Bantry Bay since 1969 without being supervised by a harbour authority.

It would be unwise to suggest any connection between this and the fact that in 1968 Gulf invited Eire president Jack Lynch on a four-week world tour which culminated in the launching of the supertanker 'Universe Leader'. Nice one, Jack! (Wonder who'll be our first local dignitary to go on one of their free trips?)



YET ANOTHER PRESIDENT who likes oil is French playboy Giscard D'Estaing. He holds a majority stake in the Amreq Company, which owns Union Industrielle et d'Enterprise of Paris.

This latter company is doing construction work for three oil firms, one of whom is now being investigated by a French parliamentary commission for price-fixing and tax evasion.



HOW UNUSUAL: Remember Lord Polwarth, the Tory ex-Minister of State for Scotland, who was caught with his oil shares showing? Well, this politician with a background in banking and insurance has become a director of the Halliburton Company of Dallas, Texas.

The Halliburton group includes Brown and Root (see Free Press No. 17). Brown and Root are busily building rigs at Nigg in Scotland - or at least they hope to be... they'd just got a contract to build a rig for Burmah Oil when Burmah ran out of cash.

Still, we wish Brown and Root all the best with one of their latest joint ventures with Wimpey in the Middle East. They are carrying on the interest that their founders (George and Hermann Brown) showed in the area when their Brown Foundation Inc of Houston paid \$200,000 in 1963/64 to the American Friends of the Middle East.

As author Ferman? Lundberg said: "By no kind of elastic interpretation can these donations be regarded as in the cause of sweet charity."

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