

CORRUPTION IN KIRKBY

THE MAN in the bow-tie is Eric Spencer Stevenson, Knowsley Council's chief architect.

The man in the tee-shirt is millionaire builder George Leatherbarrow.

The expensive sports car is an Alfa Romeo. The Alfa cost £2,000. And it was a favour from George to Eric.

At the time the two men were on opposite sides in negotiations involving millions of pounds of public money.

Eric Spencer Stevenson was then Kirkby Council's architect. He was helping to negotiate the £2,300,000 contract for the final stage of the Tower Hill housing estate.

The firm he was negotiating with was George Leatherbarrow (Builders) Ltd.

Naturally, Leatherbarrow and Stevenson deny the car was a gift.

Both deny it was George who bought it; or that he ever owned it; or that he sold it to his friend Eric; or that he lent him the money to pay for it.

The truth is this: In October or November 1970, George Leatherbarrow bought the car from a dealer in Newton-le-Willows. Six months earlier he had asked to be told if an expensive sports car turned up in the show-room.

The dealer telephoned Leatherbarrow to tell him they had got hold of an almost new, maroon Alfa Romeo 1750, registration number EGC 114J. Leatherbarrow looked at the car, liked it, and paid around £2,000 in cash.

A few weeks later he handed the car over to Eric Spencer Stevenson.

It was Stevenson's, not Leatherbarrow's, name that

appeared on the log book. And it was Stevenson who kept the car until early 1972.

The Alfa Romeo is not the only connection between the two men.

In April 1973, millionaire builder George Leatherbarrow married for the second time. The Best Man at his wedding was council architect Eric Spencer Stevenson.

The wedding breakfast was in Stevenson's home, in Gayton Lane, Heswall.

Shortly afterwards, Stevenson had an extension built onto his house. The men and materials were sent all the way from Kirkby to Heswall by George Leatherbarrow (Builders) Ltd.

Naturally, Stevenson says he paid for them.

While all this (and more) was going on, George Leatherbarrow was growing rich out of Kirkby Council. After Stevenson was appointed architect, George Leatherbarrow (Builders) Ltd were awarded £10 million in council contracts.

The council department mainly involved was the Architect's Department.

But George Leatherbarrow's firm was not the only one to have unusual dealings with Kirkby Council. Inside we name some others.

Towards the end of our four-month investigation in Kirkby, Knowsley Council got wind of some of the things we had discovered. They immediately called in the police.

Merseyside's Fraud Squad are in charge of the enquiry. They are investigating the wheeling and dealing that was local government in the Prime Minister's constituency.

They are investigating the people we name.

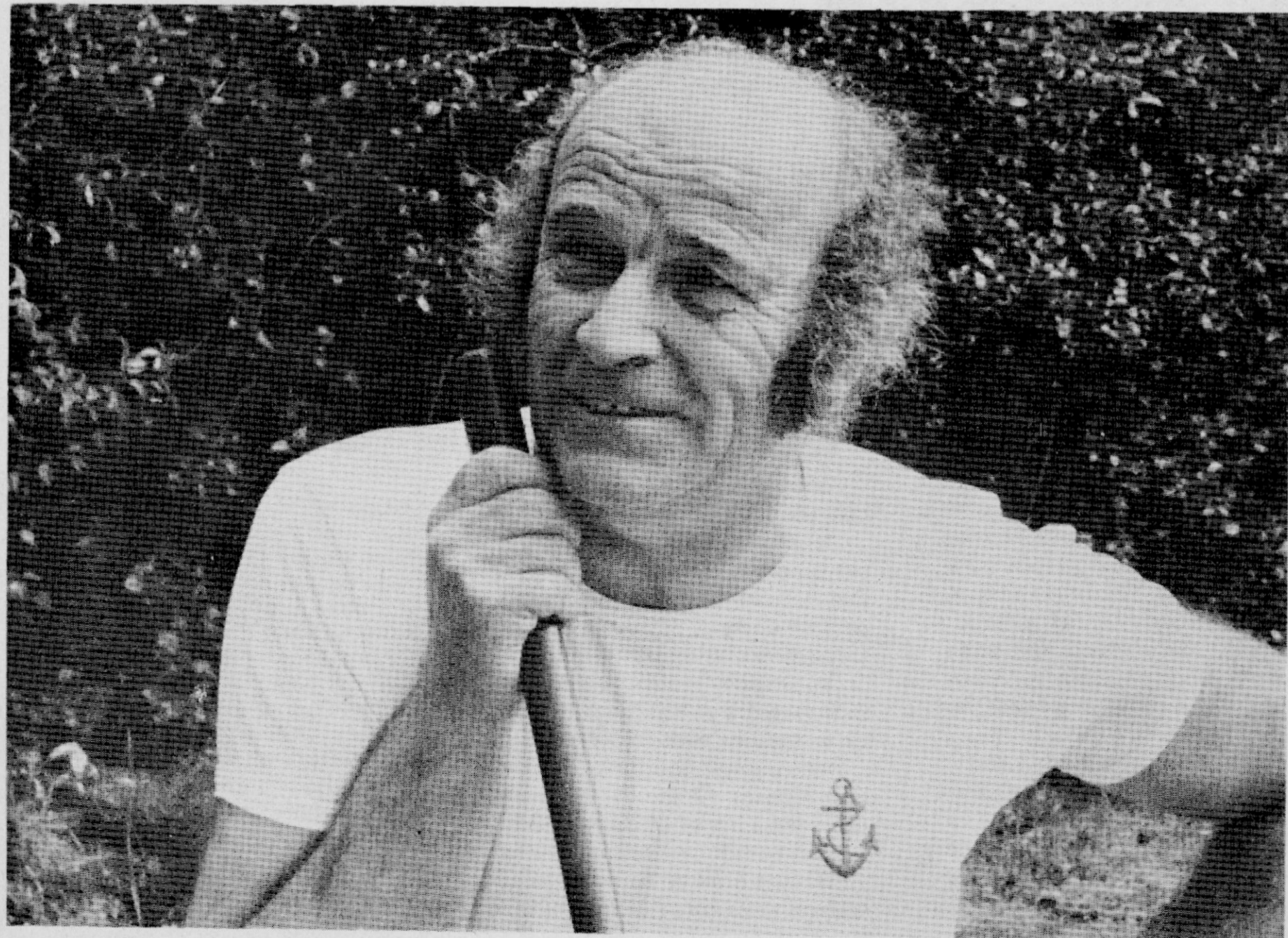
The people who have given Kirkby a bad name.



THE ARCHITECT



THE £2,000 CAR



THE MILLIONAIRE

**INSIDE: Men
who gave
Kirkby a
bad name**

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