

Kirkby council: New link with builder

THE FREE PRESS has discovered another Kirkby councillor who had a house extension built by that generous builder, George Leatherbarrow.

He is Bill Marshall, a former chairman of Kirkby council, and for many years one of its most senior councillors.

Marshall is in good company. Fallen council leader Dave Tempest also had an expensive home improvement carried out by Leatherbarrow. (More details, page 5).

And so did Eric Spencer Stevenson, the suspended Borough Architect for Knowsley.

Both Tempest and Stevenson figure in police inquiries into Leatherbarrow's £10 million worth of council contracts, following the 'Corruption in Kirkby' article in the last Free Press.

We revealed that Stevenson had received a £2,000 Alfa Romeo car from Leatherbarrow; was best man at Leatherbarrow's second wedding; and that both Stevenson and Tempest went on a trip to London paid for by Leatherbarrow.

Like his council colleagues, Bill Marshall had an extension built on to his home in Cole Crescent, Aughton, when Leatherbarrow was working on the Tower Hill council estate.

And just like the others, Marshall tells a bizarre tale about how he paid for the work. Marshall's story is particularly difficult to believe because he is a qualified accountant and businessman.

His extension, he says, cost £1,250. But he did not pay by cheque,



MARSHALL - bizarre tale

or banker's order, or even by a lump sum drawn from his account.

Bill Marshall claims he drew small amounts from his bank over a period and then paid cash. There was "no particular reason" for doing this. He was just "drawing a couple of hundred pounds at a time - monthly, I think."

(We forgot to ask whether an accountant keeps his money in a box under the bed or buried in the garden.)

This method of payment would, of course, be more difficult for the police to trace than more usual practices.

Until last year, "Laughing Boy" Marshall - he frequently giggles for no reason - was a key figure in Kirkby politics. He was Dave Tempest's right-hand man on the council.

Year after year Tempest and

Marshall controlled the most powerful committees. Tempest would be chairman and Marshall vice-chairman of the General Purposes Committee, the Finance Committee and the Public Works Committee.

They both served on the five-man sub-committee which dealt with the commercial development of Kirkby town centre. They both accepted thousands of pounds worth of contracts for work on sports facilities.

And, of course, they were both on the special Housing Committee which awarded the Tower Hill phase 2B contract to George Leatherbarrow (Builders) Ltd.

● For a long time Tempest and Marshall even worked at the same place: Yorkshire Imperial Metals. But then Marshall left to start his successful firm, ABP Contract Cleaners Ltd and, later, A & M Warehousing. Both are based on Kirkby Industrial Estate.



LEATHERBARROW - generous

European workers to meet in city

SHOP STEWARDS at Dunlop in Speke are holding an international conference with fellow stewards from the rubber industry in Europe.

Stewards from Italy, Germany and even Spain will meet at the NUR Club in Liverpool on September 11.

The stewards from the Dunlop-Pirelli combine have held discussions before on common problems and co-ordinating action against an international employer.

This time, workers from the French-based Michelin company have also agreed to join in. "At the moment," explained Charlie Parker, a steward at the Speke factory, "Michelin is probably doing the best of all the rubber companies."

"In fact, they've taken markets off other workers. They've got to know what the problem is—

Continued on back page

Many witness police attack

OVER A dozen people have witnessed a savage and unnecessary assault by police officers on an arrested man.

The man later needed an emergency operation on a punctured lung.

But before that, 34-year-old John Lannon was kept eleven hours in a police cell without medical attention. Only when he started coughing blood was he taken to Walton Hospital in a police car.

Lannon spent six days in hospital recovering from a punctured left lung, a fractured rib, facial injuries, and severe bruising and abrasions.

His arrest outside the Woodpecker pub in Northwood, Kirkby, in the early hours of Monday, August 11, led to immediate complaints to the police.

At least two families telephoned Kirkby police station there and then. One, a young woman, said: "I told the desk sergeant that three policemen were virtually killing a young lad. He said, 'What do you want us to do?'"

Other witnesses shouted to the police to lay off. They were told to "Get back to bed." Some say the

FULL STORY: BACK PAGE

police called them "lazy bastards who didn't work", and shouted "Come down here and you'll get the same."

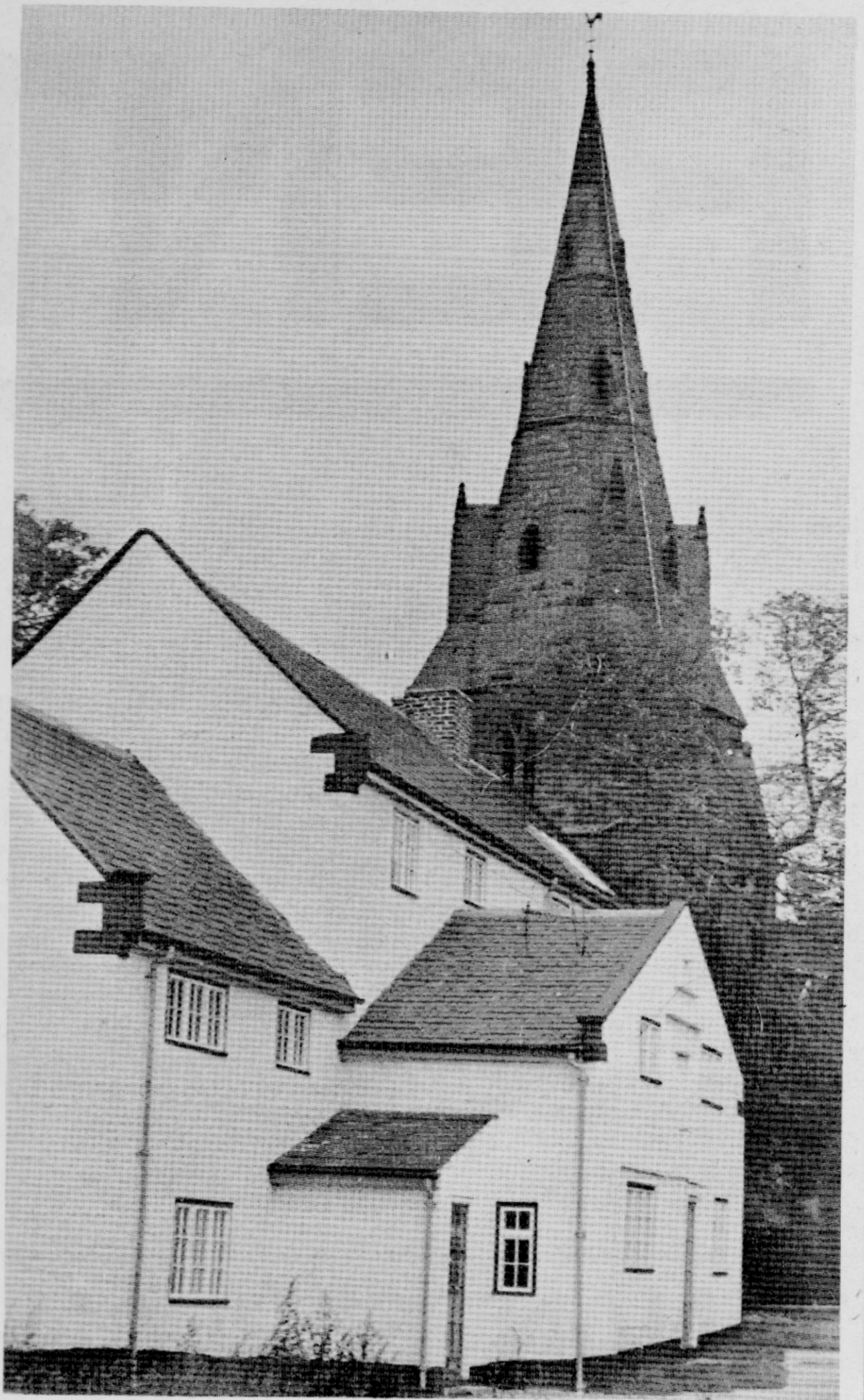
A few days later one or two people reacted to the arrest in a different way. Mrs Gladys Conway, wife of the licensee at the Woodpecker, had been seen joining police in the assault on John Lannon.

Witnesses say police held the arrested man on the ground, kicked and punched him, and allowed Mrs Conway to hit him with some sort of truncheon.

A few days after the arrest, windows were broken at the Woodpecker, the pub was temporarily closed, and the Conways moved out.

John Lannon now faces a number of charges, including theft, maliciously damaging a car belonging to the Conways, damaging police uniforms and assaulting a policeman.

He is still deciding with solicitors what action to take against the police for what they did to him.



These council houses are too good for you...

THE BEST COUNCIL houses on Merseyside will soon be filled with lucky tenants.

They will all be tip-top people, of course.

"We can't put any rag, tag and bobtail in them," explained Wirral Council's Deputy Housing Director, Mr Ken Hodgson.

The houses are obviously far too good for normal council tenants. They used to be one old farmhouse right in the middle of the picturesque village of Eastham, with a pub opposite and a church alongside.

The farmhouse was converted into three houses - two 3-bedroom and one 2-bedroom - and other farm buildings were turned into three bungalows. It all cost the people of Wirral £85,000.

But the rents fixed by Wirral Council should keep out the riff-raff. One of the 3-bedroom houses will cost £21 a week with rates. And even the bungalows will be over £9 a week.

Luckily, Wirral Council already have a tip-top tenant for that expensive 3-bedroom house.

Not only does he earn around

£7,000 a year, but he also knows a thing or two about houses. He's Mr Brian Williams, Knowsley Council's Deputy Housing Director.

His wife is also a qualified tenant, working in Wirral Housing Department.

The lucky couple hope to be moving soon from their 2-bedroom council flat in Birkenhead.

In fact it's all worked out rather nicely. Because Mr Williams will soon have a new boss at Knowsley Council.

He will be none other than Mr Ken Hodgson, the Wirral housing official with "rag, tag and bobtail" on his mind. Mr Hodgson recently accepted the job of Director of Housing at Knowsley Council.

So tenants in Halewood, Huyton, Cantril Farm and Kirkby can rest assured that in the unlikely event of the council ever building decent houses there, they won't be able to live in them.

"Firstly," as Mr Hodgson said about the Eastham houses, "because of the rent. And secondly, because you can't spend £85,000 and then have them reduced to, shall I say, normal council dwellings."

IN THIS ISSUE:

Why cars changed colour

Families who go squatting