

# Kirkby man kicked by police, say witnesses

SUNDAY, August 10, was John Lannon's daughter's thirteenth birthday. There was a party and John stayed on drinking at his parents' home at 49 Changford Road, Northwood, Kirkby.

Sometime between three and four in the morning, John left the house with a friend. By all accounts he was extremely drunk.

The Woodpecker pub is a few minutes' walk away.

What exactly happened there before he was arrested is not yet known. Whether or not Lannon committed any offence will be decided in court.

We are not concerned, here, with that. Whether he did wrong or not, John Lannon certainly did not deserve what happened to him at the hands of the police.

The Woodpecker is at a road junction with a forecourt at the front and sides and a car-park at the back.

There are houses and low-rise flats close by on every side.

The pub was being run by Mr and Mrs Conway, with Mrs Gladys Conway taking the more active part in the business. Local people say the police regularly drink after hours at the Woodpecker, often well into the night.

Whether any of the police were drinking there on the night of the arrest is not known. They were certainly on the scene quickly.

The four police mainly involved were in two minis. One of the minis was seen arriving. Another police car appeared later.

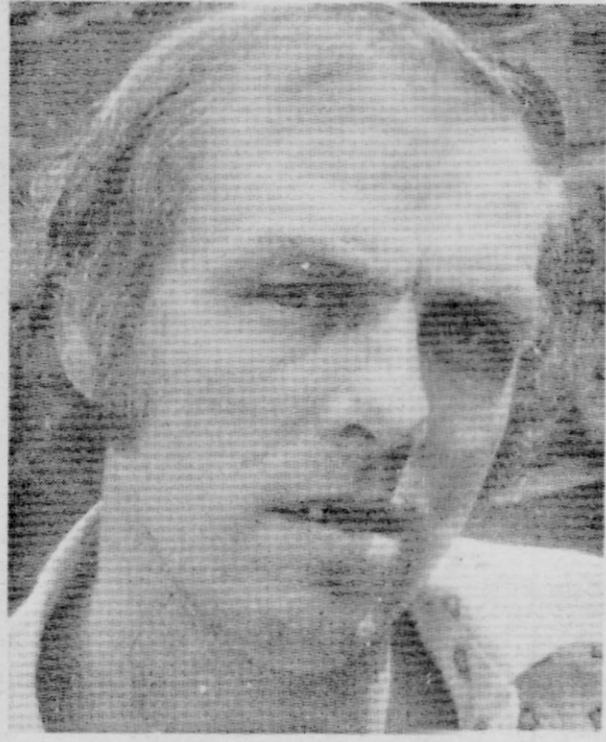
John Lannon was arrested by two shirt-sleeved police at the rear of the pub. From that moment he was "safely" in police custody.

He was beaten, dragged to the side of the pub, and attacked again. Here, Mrs Gladys Conway and two more police joined in.

The police then ran, bouncing and dragging John Lannon along the ground to one of the minis parked in Brook Hey Drive at the front of the pub.

He was screaming and badly hurt. His clothes were ripped and covered in blood. Skin and flesh was scraped off his back and backside.

What exactly happened is described below by some of the eye-witnesses. One couple told us they did not want to be mentioned for fear of reprisals from the police. The others have de-



JOHN LANNON - emergency operation

ided to speak out. It was about 4.30am. The street lights were on and the dawn was coming up.

**WITNESS ONE: Mr Christopher McKenna, 101a Bigdale Drive (a first floor flat). He is an elderly man who was looking out of the window.**

"The first I seen a mini came down and pulled up on Bigdale Drive. Two cops jumped out and ran round the corner. Somebody came over the wall and went on the floor. Two police followed, they all more or less came over together.

"They had him on the floor and were threatening him, punching him an' yelling 'Where's your mate?' I said: 'Knock it off, you're getting seen.' They were really rubbing it in, kicking and punching. I've seen it on the pictures..."

**WITNESS TWO: Mrs Dorothy Lloyd, 92 Bigdale Drive. She heard the noise and saw four policemen.**

"One of them said, 'Where's your mate?' and then one of them kicked him underneath (in his groin) and ground his heel in. All of them had a go at him... there was no need for that."

**WITNESS THREE: Mr Gerard Ashton, 92 Bigdale Drive. He and his wife, Pat, were woken by the shouting.**

"There was a woman shouting: 'I've seen what you're doing to that man'. The man was lying on the floor.

There were policemen booting him and punching him, and they dragged him, and then she (Gladys Conway) came and hit him with a baton.

"They were kicking that man in the ribs. She was striking him with a pick handle. I said: 'Eh, what's going on there?' and they said: 'Get to bed'.

"They dragged him on his back and he was screaming."

**WITNESS FOUR: Mr Jim Power, 70a Brook Hey Drive. An elderly man.**

"I could hear him say 'Ah, ah, ah'. When he fell back, two constables got him by his arms and they ran with him."

**WITNESS FIVE: Mr Bill Hunt, 72a Brook Hey Drive.**

"I was woken by the dog. They were bouncing this guy along, three of them. She (Gladys Conway) was hitting him about the legs."

**WITNESS SIX: Kathleen Bentre, 78 Brook Hey Drive. A young woman who is pregnant and has difficulty sleeping.**

"I heard someone scream. It was a horrible scream. It seemed like a young lad.

"I saw Mrs Conway hitting him with a stick. I woke my mum and dad and they were still booting him then. It made me sick.

"Two policemen had his arms behind his back and another one was kicking him. She said: 'Let go of his arm. Don't break it, they'll see it in the station.'

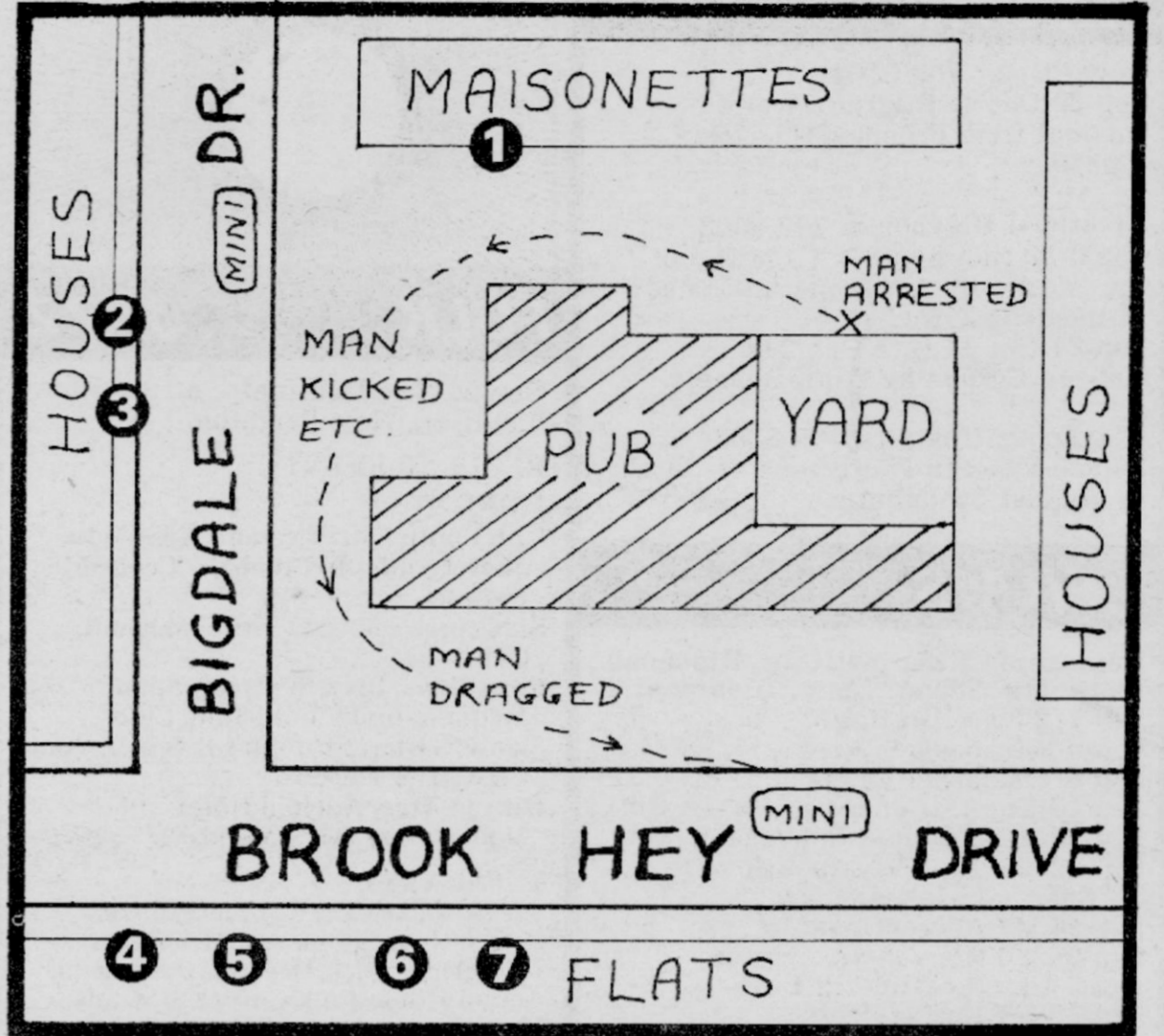
"Four of them picked him up and bounced him round to the mini.

"I phoned the police station. I told the desk sergeant that three policemen were virtually killing a young lad. He said: 'What do you want us to do? There's nothing we can do unless the young man prefers charges'."

**WITNESS SEVEN: Mr Leslie Fowler, 80 Brook Hey Drive.**

"They shoved him in the car. I heard Mrs Conway shouting 'Don't hit him there, they'll see it'... something like that. She was carrying a truncheon.

"She called me over and said: 'Did you see all this? Did you see me hitting this lad?' and I said: 'I'm not saying nothing till I've seen the lad's



Sketch map showing position of the witnesses. The wall mentioned by the first witness surrounds the yard at the back of the pub. It is about seven feet high.

solicitors.' And she said: 'I'll have you up for slander.'

John Lannon's ordeal was not yet over. Witnesses agree that the two police minis drove up Brook Hey Drive towards Simonswood Lane.

That is not the quickest way to Kirkby police station. They should have turned down Bigdale Drive or gone the other way along Brook Hey Drive and down Roughwood Drive.

We have found no witnesses to what happened next. But John Lannon says he was taken to a field off Simonswood Lane and attacked again. The same four police held him, punched him and grabbed his testicles.

When he was eventually taken to Kirkby police station, he was taken in by the back door and put straight into a cell. He says he was not checked in by the desk sergeant, not searched, and was left alone until late that morning.

His requests to see a doctor were ignored. But eleven hours later he began coughing blood and was taken to Walton Hospital in a police car.

There he underwent an emergency operation for a punctured lung and was treated for his other injuries. He signed himself out of hospital the following Saturday.

● In August last year another Kirkby man, Kenny Williams, died after being arrested in Liverpool city centre for taking a car. The evidence pointed to a vicious assault in the back of a police Land Rover. But an inquest found no connection between his injuries and his death. No action was taken against any of the police involved.

## Why the news was bad news

THE NEWS coverage of the events at the Woodpecker has been truly appalling.

Granada Television, Radio City and Radio Merseyside all carried badly researched and irresponsible stories of vandalism and intimidation driving out the licensee and his family.

None of them bothered to find out about the arrest of John Lannon, which sparked off the minor incidents at the pub.

As usual, the Liverpool Daily Post distinguished itself by the extent of its distortion. The Post was well aware of what happened at the Woodpecker, but not one word appeared about the circumstances of John Lannon's arrest.

This is not surprising. The Post stories were written by Paul Fourdrinier, a freelance journalist who also does work for the Morning Advertiser, the newspaper of the Licensed Victuallers Association.

And that's why the Daily Post carried stories about the terrorised publican who was forced out of his home by hooligans.

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## Tribunal support Marks sacking

MARKS AND SPENCER are changing their procedure for sacking staff following criticism at an Industrial Tribunal.

The firm admitted that a man dismissed from the Liverpool store had not been given a chance to state his case, or to be accompanied by his union representative. This was contrary to the Industrial Relations Code of Practice.

The tribunal was inquiring into the sacking of warehouseman Jimmy McGovern, who was fired after giving out union membership forms. Previously there was no trade union in the store.

Marks and Spencer were naturally at pains to point out they did not sack him for his union activity. Instead they produced a file showing his "history of deliberate disregard for the wishes of management."

This included several offences of forgetting to shave or put a tie on. The tribunal decided the sacking was fair. In his report, Mr P McCarthy the tribunal chairman, says: "The record of misconduct... may not appear a very gross one in terms of some industrial situations."

But he added that the firm are reasonable in expecting very high standards. In return, he says, they provide "very good working conditions with

continuing concern for each individual employee."

One example of this "concern" is the way Marks and Spencer use pensioners as cheap labour. Mr McGovern was also concerned and gave them union membership forms.

Mr McGovern was sacked when the management heard about his conversation with the pensioners. The firm claimed he had tried to start a demarcation dispute by telling the pensioners they were doing work which should be done by warehousemen.

Mr McGovern denied this. He said he simply told them they should be paid the same rate as warehousemen.

Vivid accounts of how Mr McGovern had terrified the pensioners were given by management - none of whom witnessed the incident.

With more than a little reluctance, Marks and Spencer eventually called the pensioners to give evidence. They had only vague memories of the incident and were not even certain it was Mr McGovern who had spoken to them.

Still, the tribunal decided Mr McGovern had tried to start a demarcation dispute... or at any rate the management were "reasonable" in thinking he had. After all, they could not be interested in more pay because this would affect their pensions.

## DUNLOP WORKERS

Continued from page one they're all right now but in the near future this might be reversed."

The British stewards have already discovered they are well behind in some fields.

"The Italians are able to negotiate investment plans with employers."

The Speke men want the same: "Dunlop released a plan saying they are going to invest £120 million, but three-quarters is going to be invested overseas. They're investing in the cheap labour markets," said Charlie

Parker. "We think if they don't invest over here, all they're doing is importing unemployment."

Most of the cost of the conference is being met out of the Speke stewards' funds. An additional expense has been providing instantaneous translation equipment, using contacts at the university.

But the Dunlop stewards reckon they are showing the way in organising effective action against the giant multinationals.

## PORTUGUESE WORKERS' CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

# PORTUGAL solidarity

## DEMONSTRATION

### Sat Sept 20

Assemble 2.30 p.m. at Charing Cross Embankment, London. March to Speakers Corner.

Coaches will be going from Liverpool. For details contact Trades Council, Progressive Books, IS Book, Red Books, News from Nowhere, etc.