



LETTERS to the FREE PRESS

Send your letters to Liverpool Free Press, 48 Manchester Street, Liverpool 1.

Trying it on (1)

Re: Auto Supermarkets Limited.

WE HAVE been consulted by the above named of 477 West Derby Road, Liverpool 6, in reference to an article in the November issue of Liverpool Free Press under the heading "Car firm's nerve-racking game".

We are instructed that this article is untrue and misleading in many respects, including the following:

1. The car was a 1973 model although first registered in 1972.
2. The car had two previous owners at the time of sale.
3. Our clients gave a three months warranty but arranged a further warranty with the Revolution Oil Company.
4. The car was serviced before leaving our clients' premises.
5. Messrs Blake's bill for £33.80 was paid by our clients and you were informed of this by our clients.

The article is damaging to our clients' reputation as motor dealers and we must inform you that our clients are advised that unless they receive an apology for the said wrongful statements, and an undertaking to publish a further suitable article to be approved by us, repudiating the said statements and to pay our costs, they should take further action as may be necessary to obtain a withdrawal of the said statements.

—ALSOP STEVENS BATESONS & CO, India Buildings, Liverpool 2.

• The Free Press replies:

1. The car was registered on 13 November 1972. We asked ASM why they called the car a 1973 model. One of their managers blamed the Liverpool Echo, saying it was a printing mistake in the advert. If they call a car made in 1972 a 1973 model, ASM should have told us so.
2. The car did have three owners. The first was a firm called Brown and Jackson, who registered it on 6 December 1972. It was then sold to one of their employees, who registered the car in his name on October 30, 1973. He sold it to a Mr Rowland Thomas Bowder, who lives in Fleetwood.
3. We accept this point. And we accepted it in the story. In fact this is what the article was about. We wanted to know why ASM and the Revolution Oil Co both at first disclaimed any responsibility for the necessary repair work.
4. If the car was serviced then it does not say much for the standard of service carried out by ASM. This letter completely ignores the oil filter, which Mr Williams found was useless. He asked for it to be changed. Instead it was merely

... painted a bright blue colour. We have the oil filter if anyone wants to see it. Also, when Mr Williams checked the oil in the car he found it was black. Why was this not changed? There were other smaller matters which hadn't been seen to.

5. Mr Williams had to take the car to Blakes because ASM told him there was nothing wrong with the car. ASM had refused to pay the bill until we contacted them. Then they told us they would meet Mr Williams. By the time we found out from Mr Williams that ASM had paid up, the paper was being printed.

Trying it on (2)

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS today referred to the Committee of Privileges a complaint by Mr Eric Ogden based on an article in the November issue of your newspaper.

For your information I enclose the recent Official Report of Mr Ogden's complaint and a copy of a recent Report from the Committee of Privileges which indicates the considerations that arise in cases where complaints analogous to Mr Ogden's are examined.

There is no need for you to take any action in this matter at this stage, but if you wish to submit anything in writing to the Committee I should be glad to put it before them, and if you wish to ask me any questions about the proceedings of the Committee I should be glad to answer them. Yours faithfully — C.J. BOULTON, Clerk of the Committee, Table Office, House of Commons, London SW1.

Turning it on

I would be most grateful if you could through your columns give a mention to the following: I have just bought a 1958 Juke-box and I have stocked it completely with 1950's Rock 'n' Roll.

I am trying to find a pub which will be willing to install it in exchange for a share of the profits.

The proprietor should, preferably, like 1950's Rock 'n' Roll and not object to Teddy-boys. All our members are well-behaved and are only interested in listening to the music they enjoy in a nice atmosphere.

NEIL FOSTER, Secretary, The Vintage Rock 'n' Roll Appreciation Society, 16 Coniston Avenue Prescott.

House of Commons versus Free Press

THE SPEAKER of the House of Commons has ruled that an article in the November issue of the Free Press was a possible breach of parliamentary privilege.

The full-page article, under the heading: "Eric Ogden MP — who does he serve?" revealed some little-known activities of the Labour MP for West Derby.

No-one can be quite sure what is meant by parliamentary privilege. It means what parliament wants it to mean at any particular time... like a game where the winning side can change the rules if they ever look like losing.

Generally, a breach of privilege is something which brings parliament into disrepute. There have been cases in the past when newspapers suggested that some MPs' speeches were not entirely motivated by the deepest love of their constituents.

Naturally the only people fit to judge such cases are MPs themselves. The job is delegated to the Committee of Privileges, whose members include the Attorney General, Marg-

aret Thatcher, Jeremy Thorpe, Ted ("don't mention Poulson") Short, Edward Du Cann, Sir Peter Rawlinson, Michael Stewart etc etc etc.

Not only are these the judges... they're also the lawmakers, prosecutors and jury all rolled into one. And they hear their cases in private.

The Clerk of the Committee, Mr C.J. Boulton, (whose letter appears on this page) has thoughtfully sent us a booklet with some hints on preparing our defence...

1. Truth is no defence.
2. 'Fair comment' is no defence. Such a defence has never been allowed in the past, it says, though there could always be a first time. "However," it adds cheerfully, "there has never been any doubt that 'fair comment' can be raised by way of mitigation of the offence."

In these circumstances we have decided to let the committee get on with the "trial" by themselves. We do not propose to waste our time providing evidence in our defence, since this would almost certainly be "irrelevant". Nor have we yet been

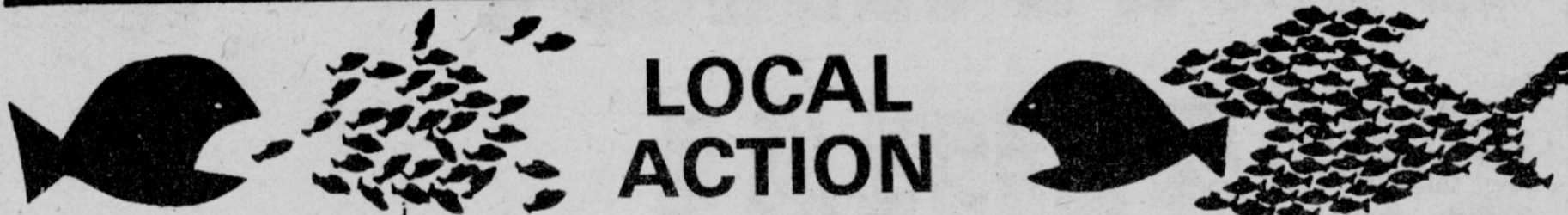


Eric Ogden MP

given any good reason why we should apologise for the article.

The punishment (not mentioned by Mr Boulton) is more clearly defined than the crime. Offenders are usually summoned to grovel at the Bar of the House and be told off by the Speaker. Those who prefer to grovel by letter may be allowed to do so.

Anyone who refuses is liable to be marched off to the Clock Tower by the Serjeant-at-Arms, where they may be detained until the next General Election.



Tenants lose court battle

A WALTON man's summonses against his private landlord and the City Council over the appalling conditions of his house were thrown out by Liverpool magistrate H.A. Fry last month.

Fry also awarded £20 costs to the council who, he ruled, had no case to answer.

Mr Foote, of 122 Ruskin Street, Walton, accused his landlord, the H.Graff Trust Co., of 14 Cook Street, of not doing enough to abate a number of statutory nuisances in the house, including rising damp and defective plaster and ceilings.

A statutory nuisance under the

1936 Health Act has to be unhealthy and a nuisance.

The summons against the council said they had not carried out their statutory duty to force the landlord to carry out repairs.

Throughout the hearing the council's legal representative, Mrs Hensby, and Graff's solicitor, Mr Canter, combined to attack Mr Foote and his only witness, Jim Hunter, an independent architect who produced two detailed reports on the house.

For instance, Canter, who continually interrupted the proceedings from his seat, asked Mr Hunter if he used binoculars to inspect the roof of the house after Hunter had revealed he did not actually climb on the roof.

Nobody asked Mr White of the public health department, a witness called by Canter and employed by the council, if he had climbed on the roof — because they all knew he did not.

Mr White said a lot of the damp was caused by the tenants drying their washing in a house which had its windows and chimney blocked off. Mr Hunter said the damp was due to the defects in the house.

The court took Mr White's word against the independent architect.

Mr White said he visited the house two days before the hearing and on that day the chimney breast was dry. Mr Hunter said he went to the house the day before the hearing and the chimney breast was wet.

The court took Mr White's word. Fry said: "You have to expect some damp in these old houses." He then dismissed the case.

A second similar case against the B.T.G. Trust and the council was withdrawn by Mr Scroggie, of 40 Hamden Street, Walton.

The prime movers of the action, the Walton Young Volunteers of Merseyside, were disgusted after the decision. Their spokesman, Bill Markham, said: "They never even went to see the house for themselves. The council joined with the private landlord to defeat us."

The YVM are to set up a voluntary fund to pay Mr Foote's costs.

OLD SWAN SCHEME

THE CUTS in the Social Services have resulted in the birth of the "Old Swan scheme".

Local people feel that there are many problems, such as delinquency and domestic upsets, which friends and neighbours are capable of dealing with.

A representative from each street will be elected and when most of the area is covered, and some basic training given, a pilot scheme will be launched in the new year.

Bus service to Risley

ADULTS with children or relations in the notorious Risley Remand Centre are joining together to campaign for better visiting facilities.

John Warren, a community worker in Nile Street Settlement is helping to set up the group.

At present people have to wait for long periods before they can see the person they are visiting. Then they are led into a big

room where everyone has to shout through a thick pane of glass... watched all the time by guards.

A mini-bus service to the centre near Warrington is also being run. This is to cut the cost and travelling time.

Anyone interested in the bus service or in helping to campaign for better conditions should contact John at 709 4811/2.

Bye, bye, Harry — Sayers

(Continued from page one)

van after delivering some food. He was ambushed and forced to stop by another car.

The car was owned by Arthur Bickerton, Sayer's transport manager. He was accompanied by several police officers.

They said they wanted to search the van. While Smith was opening the back-doors, a small package was found in the driver's compartment.

It contained a bit of bacon and a piece of cheese. Smith was accused of stealing them from a Sayers

shop. He said he had never seen the package before.

At the Crown Court, Smith was accused of stealing 70p worth of food. He said he was innocent, but was found guilty and sentenced to six months — suspended for two years.

Smith had never before been in any trouble with the law.

On top of this sentence Smith was sacked. Immediately the 80 Sayers drivers went on strike. They were joined by the engineers and electricians.

The strikers were then sent a threatening letter from the directors saying they would be sacked (or would have terminated their employment) if they did not clock on for the next shift.

Most of the drivers shot back to work on Saturday November 8.

Sayers then sacked some engineers who went into work on Monday. They were told they should have come in on the previous Saturday, although this was an overtime period.

Anyway now all twenty engineers and electricians have been sacked. Perhaps at last Sayers are happy. Harry Rimmer is one of the electricians.

The strikers have now called for a total boycott of all Sayers' food.

• Offers of help and donations to Sayers Engineers Strike Committee, H. Rimmer, EEPTU, 118 Allerford Road, Liverpool 12.

ANANDA PRINTING

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