

# Father fined over school uniforms

AN UNEMPLOYED Kirkby man has ended up in court for refusing to buy his children school uniforms.

Mr Francis Paine, of Mainside Road, Southdene, was fined £15 by Kirkby magistrates last month because his three daughters, Julie, Sylvia and Angela, had not been attending school.

But — as Mr Paine told the court — he has sent the girls to Brookfield Comprehensive every day. They have been turned away by the school because they are not wearing the correct uniform.

Brookfield reintroduced school uniform last September. The Headmaster says this was done after requests from parents.

But Mr Paine cannot afford to spend up to £90 on three uniforms. And he does not want to apply for means-tested Social Security grants to pay for them.

"I don't go to the Social Security for grants. Why should I take £90 of government money which I neither want nor need? It's not going to be beneficial in any way," he says.

Mr Paine thinks it's madness to spend thousands of pounds on school uniforms when essential educational services are being cut. And he points out that his eldest girl, Julie, leaves school this April, anyway.

Something else Mr Paine can't

understand is why the school should pick on him. About 50 children were sent home on the first day of term. But since then, apparently, only the Paine girls have not been allowed to return.

And yet Brookfield's Headmaster, Mr R.F. Nelson, told the school governors on October 30 that 97% of pupils were wearing the correct uniform. This means that around 40 children are not.

Mr Paine has photographs of some of them going into school recently.

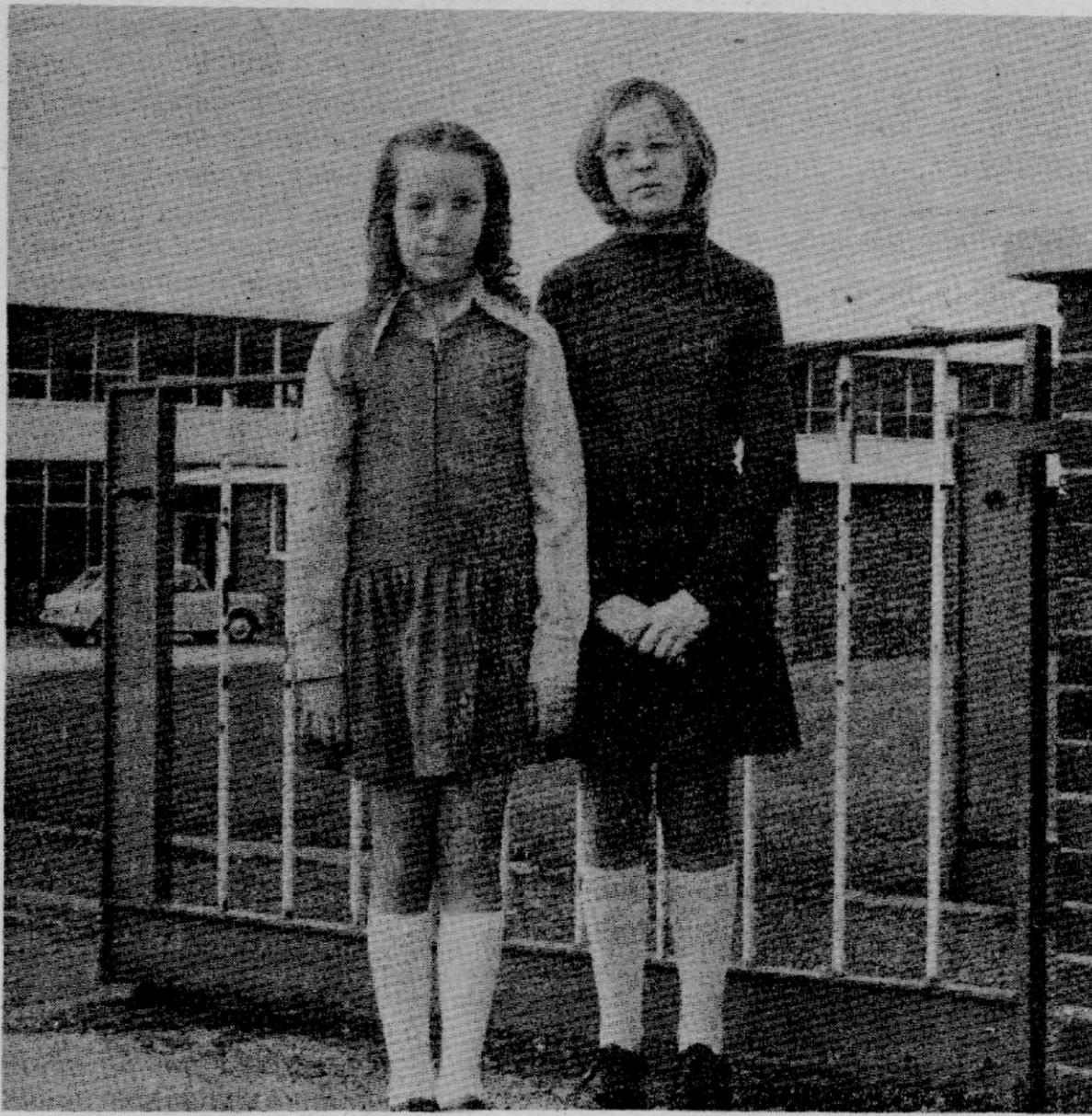
But he has had some difficulty discussing the matter with Mr Nelson. The Headmaster tried to tape their conversation in his office — until Mr Paine spotted the microphone hidden behind a card.

Then Mr Nelson ended the discussion by declaring Mr Paine "persona non grata" (not welcome) before rushing off and locking himself in what Mr Paine took to be a lavatory.

The school governors, headed by Councillor John King, are unanimously supporting their Headmaster's actions.

The school argues that uniforms help parents financially by eliminating competition among children for new clothes, and help give the school a "good image".

Mr Paine says he is not being dictated to. And there is little doubt that the cost of uniforms is a real hardship



Ready for school — Angela and Sylvia Paine.

for families whose income is not quite low enough for Social Security grants, or who do not want to apply for them.

● One of Mr Paine's daughters was allowed back to school just before Christmas after she had her skirt dyed blue.



MR EUSTACE Thorn drew a revolver in a South coast bank and demanded the takings before tripping over the manager's dog, falling across the counter, and being stunned by a blow from a cashier's cushion. He was jailed for life.



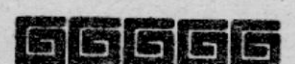
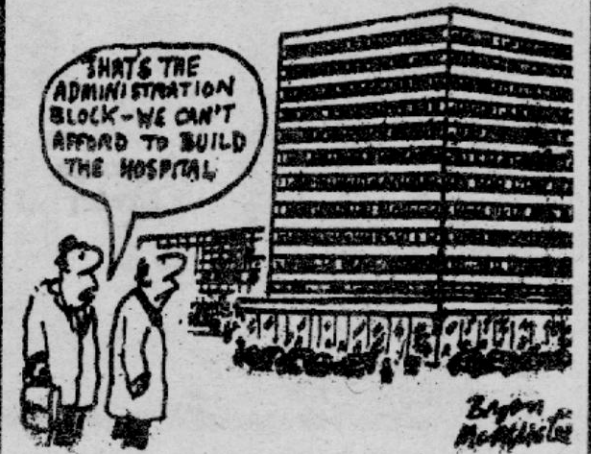
AT THE beginning of the Balcombe Street siege it was thought the army had been called in when an armoured "Pig" was seen in the area.

But it was later found to be parked outside the home of an eccentric individual who goes to work in it.



A PARCEL sent to Derbyshire County Council was so badly packed it burst open in transit. And on top of that there was no stamp on it.

Inside, officials discovered 200 leaflets from the Post Office Users' National Council, entitled: "Have you a complaint about the Post Office."



TIMOTHY Elington of Thorpe Bay, Essex, filled 40 contraceptives with £600 worth of cannabis, knotted them, swallowed them, and passed through Heathrow customs undetected.

He later became unwell and was taken to hospital where he admitted he was a drug smuggler.

The police arrested him and kept him under observation until he passed the contraceptives. He was later charged with possession and damaging police cell bedding and was jailed for two years.

## Joe goes house hunting again

COUNCILLOR Joe Morgan is house hunting again. And once more, he's causing nothing but embarrassment.

The former Labour housing chairman wants to leave his council flat off Queens Drive, Walton.

Instead, he fancies a select house or flat in an even more select area such as Aigburth.

Recently he approached Merseyside Improved Houses, asking if they could find him another home.

M.I.H. are a charitable housing association who specialise in housing people in need. Naturally they have a long waiting list.

Not surprisingly, M.I.H. are rather concerned. They know Joe Morgan is living comfortably. But their projects depend on approval from the city council.

And M.I.H. don't want to upset any councillor, especially Old Joe, who still dreams of becoming housing chairman once again.

When he was housing boss, Morgan was well-known for telling squatters to wait their turn in the long housing queue. At the same time, he was pestering both M.I.H. and the Speke Housing Manager for a nice new home.

## The unacceptable face of Caplinism

WIDOW Mrs Catherine Smith lived at 22 Shelley Street, Bootle, for 34 years.

And landlord Tony Caplin thought that was long enough. He wanted to do up the house — which he had never repaired — and sell it.

Tony Caplin, the chairman of Merseyside Young Conservatives and executive member of the Tory Reform Group, is a very persuasive and a very nasty young man.

On Christmas Eve, a year ago, he visited Mrs Smith, who owed a small amount in rent.

"He said he'd send somebody to take my furniture. We had a Christmas tree — he said we'll take that as well."

"He had the cheek to say as he went out the door, Merry Christmas. I was crying," says 55-year-old Mrs Smith.

By last summer, Caplin had found another way of getting his hands on the house. He offered Mrs Smith a "luxury flat", rent-free for three months, and he would forget those rent arrears.

Mrs Smith, whose children are now grown up, accepted. And she moved into a two-bedroom flat above an empty shop at 362 Marsh Lane, Bootle. Caplin's men had been doing a little decorating.

"The first night we came rain came in everywhere."

Since moving in July, Mrs Smith has not seen or heard from Caplin, and she has not paid any rent.

But Tony Caplin is not being generous. Six weeks after Mrs Smith moved in, a man with a key marched in to have a look round. He was interested in buying both the shop and the flat.

The property is being sold byough Caplin's company, Lancastrian Developments, through estate agents Woods and Partners, of North John Street, Liverpool.

The trouble is that if it is sold, Mrs Smith may have difficulty in establishing that she is a tenant — Tony Caplin has not, of course, given her a rent book.

● Estate agents T.I. Phillips and Sons of 149 Stanley Road, Bootle, have told us they did not advertise the disgraceful house in Peel Road, Bootle (See



The unpleasant Tony Caplin

Free Press 22) as a "house of character".

They say they advertised it as an "unusual terrace". Truer words were never spoke. We have not yet discovered which surveyor passed Mr Norgate's house as sufficient security for a mortgage from the Oak Co-operative Building Society.

Meanwhile Mr Norgate's application for legal aid to sue Tony Caplin has been turned down under an old rule of law, "Buyer Beware". Like much of English "justice", this allows the strong to exploit the weak.

WE WOULD be interested to hear from anyone who has had dealings with the Caplin family. Their companies include: Lancastrian Developments, Provincial Towns and Country Estates, Commercial and General Insurance Brokers (London) Ltd, London and Universal Properties, Commercial Securities Unit Trust Managers, Bankhall Garages, and of course, the Oak Co-operative Building Society.

## Fuel bill appeal

THE KIRKBY woman who got an electricity bill after a three-year gap has appealed against a Social Security decision not to pay it.

Mrs Diana Palmer has only £15 a week to keep herself and her 12-year-old daughter. Social Security have been keeping £2 a week on top of that to meet fuel bills.

But nobody realised the electricity was not being paid. And Social Security have refused to make any extra payment towards the £174 bill.

Instead, they offered Mrs Palmer £8 for a paraffin heater in case she was cut off.

As we go to press, Mrs Palmer's appeal against the decision is due to be heard.

MANWEB, who say they did not send bills because they thought Mrs Palmer had been disconnected, were asking for an immediate payment of £40 and an impossible weekly sum of £5.

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