

THE OIL SHEIKHS OF LIVERPOOL

Continuing the story of Liverpool's oil bonanza in the mid-sixties, when petrol stations were valuable properties and fortunes could be made overnight...

LAST MONTH'S 'Oil Sheikh' article about Councillor Eddie Roderick has resulted in calls from some Labour Party members for him to issue a denial, or resign as deputy leader of the Party in Liverpool.

The article revealed Roderick's close interest in a planning application for a garage in West Derby, and that - for some reason - the man making the application sold his house cheaply to the Roderick family.

So far, Roderick has neither issued a denial nor resigned. And, wisely, he has not wasted his money employing a solicitor to make legal threats.

A few years ago, Councillor Roderick needed a good solicitor. He was charged in 1966 with soliciting a £2,000 bribe over another garage application and, fortunately, acquitted.

He was lucky enough to have, as his solicitor, the reknowned Rex Makin.

Makin defended both Roderick and a former Conservative councillor, Bill Holland. Holland was found guilty of soliciting a £9,000 bribe and sent down for nine months.

He had not been a member of the Planning Committee and has always insisted that he was innocent.

At the time of his trial, Makin, his solicitor, was himself no stranger to the oil business.

The then Labour leader of the City Council, Alderman Bill Sefton, was running two petrol stations in partnership with Alderman Bill Crookes. Their company was called Oakwalk.

According to the annual returns for 1966, one-third of the shares in Oakwalk were held jointly by Rex Makin, Shirley Makin, and Brian Woodhams (one of Makin's partners).

Another of Makin's partners, Julian Green, was both a director and company secretary of Oakwalk.

More about Makin's interest came



Councillor Roderick - called on to deny it or resign.

out in 1970 when he appeared as a star witness in the libel case brought by Sefton and Crookes against a former council colleague, Mrs Mollie Cumella. This case centred on allegations about a garage.

At the trial, Makin said of the shares in Oakwalk: "We only hold them as trustees, we have no personal interest."

He explained that the shares were held on trust for his children. In fact, their stake in Sefton's garage amounted to £5,000.

Couple lose out to mortgage firm

A BIRKENHEAD COUPLE are regretting the day they answered a classified advertisement in the Liverpool Echo.

The advert offered 100% mortgages through brokers J. Wehrli Ltd, of Northwood, Middlesex.

Brian and Margaret Goodacre were hoping to move out of their council flat at 44 Exmouth Way, Birkenhead. They had their eye on a three-bedroom terrace house costing £3,000. And they needed a mortgage to get it.

The registration fee was a small matter of £57. Regrettably the Goodacres signed a registration form and sent the money off to the rep, Malcolm Winnington, of 20 Trent Avenue, Winsford.

According to the document they signed, the £57 "registers and retains myself to your facilities and... is



The Echo advertisement

towards your expenses and disbursements re advertising costs, office expenses, representatives' and negotiators' salaries and other disbursements incurred in applying for the necessary facilities..."

The document was careful to point out that the fee did not guarantee a mortgage. And it promised that the £57 would be taken into account in assessing final fees (minimum £60).

What it did not say was that the money would be returned if the application for a mortgage was unsuccessful.

The Goodacres' application

certainly will be unsuccessful. They cannot possibly qualify for a mortgage because neither has guaranteed earnings. Both work as reps on commission - and earn no more than £25 a week each.

But when Margaret Goodacre phoned the Wehrli office to find out what was happening they simply sent an application form. It asked for a further £25 "administration fee" and a £17 survey fee.

At this stage, the Goodacres asked their solicitor to try and get their money back. He's having some difficulty.

Wehrli are quite well-known in the mortgage and insurance business. Some time ago the Scottish Life Assurance Company stopped dealing with them for some reason which, said a Wehrli spokesman, "I don't quite remember".

Good turn makes family homeless

A FAMILY of "immigrants" who moved from Kirkby to Liverpool are at the centre of a battle between council officials.

The housing department want to "repatriate" them in Kirkby. The social services want to let them stay in Liverpool.

Joseph and Maria Swindells, who have two children aged nine months and four years, lived in a flat in Kirkby for five years.

Mr Swindells has a housebound mother who suffers from bronchial asthma. She lives in a council house in Norris Green.

He wanted to look after her, but the problem was travelling from Kirkby. He's unemployed and applied for a travel allowance. This was refused on the grounds that his mother was not ill enough to be in hospital.

So the Swindells left their flat in Kirkby (they owed no rent) and moved in with the mother. Liverpool Corporation agreed to the move.

Then the trouble started. A series of family rows broke out.

"We went to Norris Green Social Services," said Mr Swindells. "They said try and hang on. But it was no good. We had to leave."

They were put up in a hotel in Mount Pleasant for three weeks, then moved to Langtry House (the centre for homeless families).

Eventually they might have been found a council house in Liverpool, within visiting distance of Mr Swindells' mother. Might. But there was one problem.

They had come from Kirkby. Liverpool Housing Department have some strange ideas about the homeless. One is that facilities for them are so wonderful in Liverpool that homeless families flock to the city from miles around.

And they think they know how to deal with that. Put the homeless on a train at Lime Street with a one-way ticket to the town they last lived in.

With the Swindells, if they have their way, the solution will be rather cheaper. A limited-stop bus back to Kirkby.

Man fights 'disabled' tag

A FATHER OF FOUR is fighting an attempt by civil servants to classify him as disabled.

43-year-old Andrew Dwyer of Hazelbeech Crescent, Norris Green, has been ill for about a year with an ulcer. He's also had kidney trouble - thought to be a side-effect of treatment for the ulcer.

Mr Dwyer is a painter and decorator, and has not been able to work near gloss paint because the fumes made him sick.

Following medical tests, a National Insurance tribunal stopped his £37 a week sickness benefit. They suggested he should register as disabled and go for retraining.

Mr Dwyer didn't like the sound of that. "I should imagine they'd retrain me as a lift attendant or a porter," he said. "I'd rather wait till the complaint is cleared up and go back to painting."

His appeal against the tribunal's ruling is due to be heard later this month. Meanwhile he and his family have to make do on £27 Social Security - and some weeks they've had trouble getting even that.

Mr Dwyer hopes that if he wins his appeal it could help other people in a similar position.

"But a spokeswoman for Check! (the welfare rights centre) was not optimistic.

"According to all precedents they can only pay invalidity [sickness] benefit if a person is incapable of work," she said. "They say that where any kind of work can be defined as in his capacity, he should do it."

"If they think you're well enough to make baskets, they expect you to make them. It doesn't matter if nobody wants to buy them afterwards."

Ve haf vays . . .

A PINT OF BITTER awaits any DHSS official who can tell us why - and how - dossiers of personal details are kept on claimants.

A reader informs us that details such as height, hair colour and local accent are all recorded.

Maybe 3ft Albinos with broad St Helens brogues are not eligible for unemployment benefit.

Can anyone say why? Is it possible the DHSS is one massive cover for an escort agency? Watch this space!

O'HALLIGAN'S PARLOUR

by appointment to: President Idi Amin

DAILY MIRROR, Thursday, March 18, 1976

Princess Margaret openly visited the Bath restaurant, which is a meeting place for local hippie-trendies and a centre for backgammon players.

She did not join in the restaurant work, unlike her commune friends, but she appeared to enjoy the relaxed atmosphere.

The place is so casual that unemployed actors, actresses and artists often wait on table.

Home of the Liverpool School of Language, Music Dream & Pun

18 Mathew Street Liverpool 2

O'Cean Halligan... Charles Gilmour Alexander... Peter Osborne O'Halligan

Council evict a 70-year-old man

MR PATRICK McLoughlin, aged 70, came home from shopping and found a note pinned to the door of his Corporation flat.

It informed him that he had been evicted, and that the front door lock had been changed.

But for friends, Mr McLoughlin would have been out on the streets.

The following day he saw a corporation official. "He said get a van and pick your furniture up. I said where can I get a van? He said the Social Security will pay for it."

"I said where am I going to put the furniture? He said that's your problem."

Mr McLoughlin stayed with friends while they fought to get him his flat back. They angrily turned down a social worker's offer of temporary

accommodation in a home for elderly women.

But they made such a fuss that, after four days, the corporation had to back down and return Mr McLoughlin's key to him. He has now moved back into the flat at 79 Dentford Road, Knotty Ash.

He has agreed to have his rent deducted by the Social Security, and an additional 50p a week taken out towards his arrears.

When he was evicted his arrears were about £190. Mr McLoughlin, a widower who worked 28 years on the docks before retirement, said this about his rent:

"You pay your gas bill, you pay your electricity bill and what have you got left? I had no chance at all. I told them..."

"Britain belongs to the workers - save it!"

MAY DAY MEETING

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