



National Party candidate Matchett

How National Party won on the pools

A COMBINATION of apathy, deception and a Littlewoods pools collector helped the National Front and National Party to launch their campaigns in the recent by-election for Liverpool's Fairfield Ward.

To stand for election for the council, a candidate needs ten signatures of proposal from residents in the ward — no problem for the major parties, but not so easy for right wing minority groups.

The ten people who signed for the National Party had one thing in common. No, they weren't all fascists, they all filled in Littlewoods pools coupons.

Mrs Matchett is the lady who collects the coupons, and she is married to Mr Matchett, the National Party candidate.

While she was collecting the pools, Mrs Matchett also collected the signatures, but seems to have forgotten to tell most people what party her husband represented.

One old gentleman thought he'd signed a form for Littlewoods, and another couple received an irate call from the Liberal party who thought they'd lost two supporters. They had been told they were signing for an independent and have since can-

celled their pools.

In four cases Mrs Matchett asked the wife of the household to sign on her husband's behalf, which is illegal and has annoyed some husbands. One angry husband declared he would "bone that old faggot next time she calls".

Out of the ten, only one said he was a National Front supporter. Most of the others had assumed it was a Liberal or Labour man and some just hadn't bothered to ask.

The National Front, even without a pools collector, were also able to persuade residents to propose their candidate, Mr Geoffrey Allen, without revealing their identity.

Out of the eight people we contacted, only three were NF supporters. Apart from one lady in the house on her own who signed "to get rid of two men", the rest thought they were signing for a Labour candidate. One person did ask — but after she'd signed. She didn't get an answer.

The declining interest in party politics and voting is, in some ways, an encouraging sign. But it can also be dangerous when nationalists and fascists are about.

Watch out for pools collectors in the next election.

Free Press statement

WE APOLOGISE to readers and news-agents for the long delay since our last edition.

This is not due to either legal or money troubles. Unfortunately we have lost one of the four people mainly responsible for the paper.

This means it will be impossible for the Free Press to appear monthly in the foreseeable future. The situation would

improve if we had more people willing to write one or two stories per issue on a regular basis. Any volunteers?

Our appeal for funds raised over £500 — enough to clear outstanding bills. Without the money we would certainly have finished.

Our warmest thanks to those shop stewards committees and individuals who contributed. Thank you for both the money and the encouragement.

'RICHER ON DOLE' SLUR IS EXPOSED

"SACKED RAY is £3 richer on the dole" was the front-page headline in the News of the World on November 21.

It was a pack of lies. The man concerned is not £3 "richer" being out of work. He is not even "on the dole"!

The truth is that News of the World 'reporter' Keith Beabey deliberately ignored the facts to produce a story in line with his newspaper's miserable campaign against the unemployed.

- Beabey wrote that Ray Walker had a "surprise when he signed on the dole". Ray Walker has not signed on the dole. The money he gets is sickness benefit.
- He wrote that Ray Walker was "more than £3 a week better off than when he was working". Beabey was referring to Walker's 22½-hours-a-week job with Liverpool Social Services.

He forgot to mention that Ray Walker had a part-time job because he also ran a taxi firm. Ray ended his connection with Ray's Taxis, of Park Road, Dingle, shortly before he lost his other job. But until then he was taking home an additional £20 a week from the taxis.

- He quotes Ray Walker's wife, Elizabeth, as saying, "We're being lulled into a life of luxury by getting so much unemployment money."

Mrs Walker denies saying any such thing. Certainly it would have been a ridiculous thing to say because the Walkers are at least £17 a week poorer since Mr Walker lost his job and the taxi firm.

- He forgot to mention that Mrs Walker also works, bringing home £18 a week; that the family live in a smart detached house they have rebuilt themselves from two railway cottages; and that they run a 9-year-old Mercedes. Of course, none of this fitted the impression Beabey wanted to give of a family who had been living on £17 a week.

Sacked Ray is £3 richer on the dole

IT WAS a shock for Ray Walker when he got the sack from his job.

But he had an even bigger surprise when he signed on the dole—for he found that he was more than £3 a week better off when he was working.

By KEITH BEABEY

man who is prepared to work to be given money for staying at home.

Ray was fired after nearly six months with

children to look after and the last thing I wanted was to be out of work." Ray has tried unsuccessfully to get a job through his local employment exchange.

"I want to work," he told me. "I'm not a lazy bloke."

GUIDE TO SCROUNGERS

— See Centre Pages

- He deliberately implied that the couple are against state benefits.

Mrs Walker tells a different story: "I said to Keith Beabey my feelings are so bitter I don't want him to work again. I'll claim all the benefits I'm entitled to when I find out about them. That's what I wanted him to print."

Keith Beabey was in a better position than most journalists to get the facts right. He had previously met Ray Walker only two years ago while writing another story.

Walker, then a porter at New Grafton House old people's home, had made allegations of cruelty to elderly inmates. Beabey's story, quoting Ray Walker, appeared on August 18, 1974.

Ray Walker was later sacked by the corporation. But he did not admit this when he became a part-time meals-on-wheels driver for the Social Services Department in February 1976. So he was sacked again in August when the corporation found out about his earlier dismissal.

After losing an appeal to an industrial tribunal, Ray's wife phoned Keith Beabey to complain that he

her husband had been victimised. Beabey, she says, was not interested until she happened to mention that Ray was getting more from Social Security than his part-time wage.

Beabey couldn't get over from Manchester fast enough. And, judging from the story he wrote, he must have concocted it on the way.

The Free Press tried to ask Keith Beabey about his article. But the News of the World refused to allow him to be interviewed. The paper's Manchester News Editor told us: "The News of the World just do not wish to discuss this with your newspaper. It's as simple as that."

Ray Walker gave this verdict on the News of the World article: "We were all shocked when we seen that. It gave a bad impression of people on the dole. We thought it would be about why I got the sack."

And a relative, who was there when Beabey interviewed the Walkers, told us: "The story should never have been in the paper the way it was. It gives the wrong impression. They printed that story for other reasons — to me it looks like political reasons. It's a slur."

No doubt the News of the World management were well pleased with their hack's efforts to turn working people with jobs against those who are unemployed. But perhaps the smile could be wiped off Keith Beabey's face if his future enquiries on Merseyside get just one reply: "Bugger off, Beabey."

Unlucky Jim barred

COUNCILLOR Jim Walker has been relieved of some control over student affairs at Liverpool Central College in Clarence Street.

At the height of his reign he was a student, a governor, secretary of the bar committee and President of the students' union — a post that came to an abrupt end when students passed a vote of no confidence in him.

Students could also have little confidence in his ability as secretary of the bar committee. Although his companion Bernie Wood was steward, things don't seem to have run at all smoothly.

Hundred of pounds worth of stock, delivered before the bar was officially open, seemed to have been drunk without anybody noticing.

The 'accounts' consist of various receipts and IOUs written on scraps of paper. And the original loan of £2,000 from the brewery had to be doubled to finish the conversion of the building, which was

carried out by an odd assortment of workmen with an odd assortment of ideas about building and decorating.

Councillor Walker and Mr Wright have resigned as secretary and steward, although Walker is still on the bar committee.

He is also one of the four governors of the college who agreed to guarantee the £2,000 loan. If the money cannot be accounted for they may become very poor governors.

The new secretary of the bar committee has written to Mr Wright asking for an explanation of the bizarre book-keeping system. So far he has not received a reply.

- Councillor Walker's luck in the academic world seems to have been little better. He passed one A-level in the summer and that was a grade E... in politics!