

Inside the elegant mansions

ABOVE the Anglican Cathedral gardens, at the foot of Huskisson Street, are Cathedral Mansions. An elegant edifice indeed, with a Public Health Order on it since February.

It was purchased in the 1950s by Mr Hands, of Sefton Court, at an 'auction'. Like many local private dwellings, it is fingered for rent by Woods & Partners.

Inside, Cathedral Mansions has all the merits of an army assault course. The roof, when and if it's there, leaks. The walls rot. The floors tilt. The windows shake, and the tenants live precariously.

Tired of the torture inflicted upon them, those tenants recently began to organise themselves into a co-operative... In case Mr Hands would get the Improvement Grant he had his agents mention... In case the property, tarted up, was sold to a housing trust.

A diet of rumours is good during a policy of

nothing: At no time had any housing trust any intention of buying Mr Hands' ruin. And, according to Corporation files, at no time either did Mr Hands or his agents apply for any kind of Improvement Grant for anything.

NO RENT BOOKS

Rents were paid quarterly, and rent books not issued by Woods & Partners. Some tenants, unemployed, had tried applying for rent from the beloved Social Security, and had been refused. For rent, you must have a rent book.

"WE'VE NONE", the tenants protested.

— Then get a note, or a photostat of a note that can be agreed upon as a rent book.

"THEY DO NOT ISSUE NOTES."

Those tenants appealed, and were successful, in that their appeal was granted at the tribunal. However, the appeal was then rejected by the Social Security Officer, on the grounds that

"The situation you had originally appealed from has changed."

You bet it had changed. A tenant in number six was in the toilet, and down came the ceiling.

Mr Hands claims he has no money. Woods & Partners claim the rent for the repairs that are never carried out. The tenants claim all of it is deception.

Those exterior walls are turning into dirty elastoplast. Interiors have running damp. Plumbing that operates at all is a feat. Plaster peels, rain waters tea, and new paint peels away in despair.

Now the property is being bought on a CPO by the Corporation. But they are almost as bankrupt as Mr Hands claims to be, and the procedure will take many months. And as the tenants try to organise themselves and carry out daily repairs so they can sleep or cook, the Mansions totter...

GLYN JONES, 24-year-old son of Merseyside Liberal leader is currently working for "Free Palestine" the newspaper of the Al Fatah Organisation.

Does his father approve? "He doesn't encourage me but then he doesn't hinder me either," said Glyn enigmatically.

Glyn is currently going out with Felicia de Shabris, daughter of the wealthy Canadian Liberal benefactor who recently bought the National Liberal Club in London for £250,000.

Liverpool Daily Post, September 16

MILLIONAIRE'S DAUGHTER FOR TRIAL

Felicia Gough, 18, daughter of a Canadian millionaire, M. George de Chabris, who earlier this year saved the National Liberal Club in London from closure, was yesterday committed for trial at Canterbury with her husband, Richard.

They face 17 charges between them involving forged National Savings Bank books and obtaining money by deception.

They were released on £100 bail each. Mrs Gough gave her address as the National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place.

Daily Telegraph, September 16

ARREST ORDEAL ENDS WITH NO EVIDENCE

A TEN-MONTH ORDEAL ended in a five-minute appearance at Liverpool Crown Court on November 2.

Mr Patrick Sands, 48, a father of ten, walked free from the court when the prosecution announced they would offer no evidence against him on a charge of handling stolen property.

But Mr Sands is still suffering from the consequences of his arrest. He lost his job as a security officer in May, after 16 years in security, the last six with the same firm.

The case against Mr Sands was based on the flimsiest evidence from the very start and he has now made an official complaint against the police.

Among his complaints against officers of the Serious Crime Squad are:

- Police procedure was highly irregular, including the taking of an obviously "wrong" piece of evidence which might have been used against him in court.

- Police statements were taken months after he was charged. The final statement — by a police officer — was not made until 4 October — nine months after the events described.

- After being released on bail for 26 days he was suddenly held in custody when he reported to the police station. He was held for 19 hours without being allowed to contact his solicitor.

- The original charge of burglary appears to be based on no evidence whatsoever.

The members of the Serious Crime Squad involved in the Sands case are Detective Sergeant Edward Humphreys, and Detective Constables Daniel Gidman and George Durno.

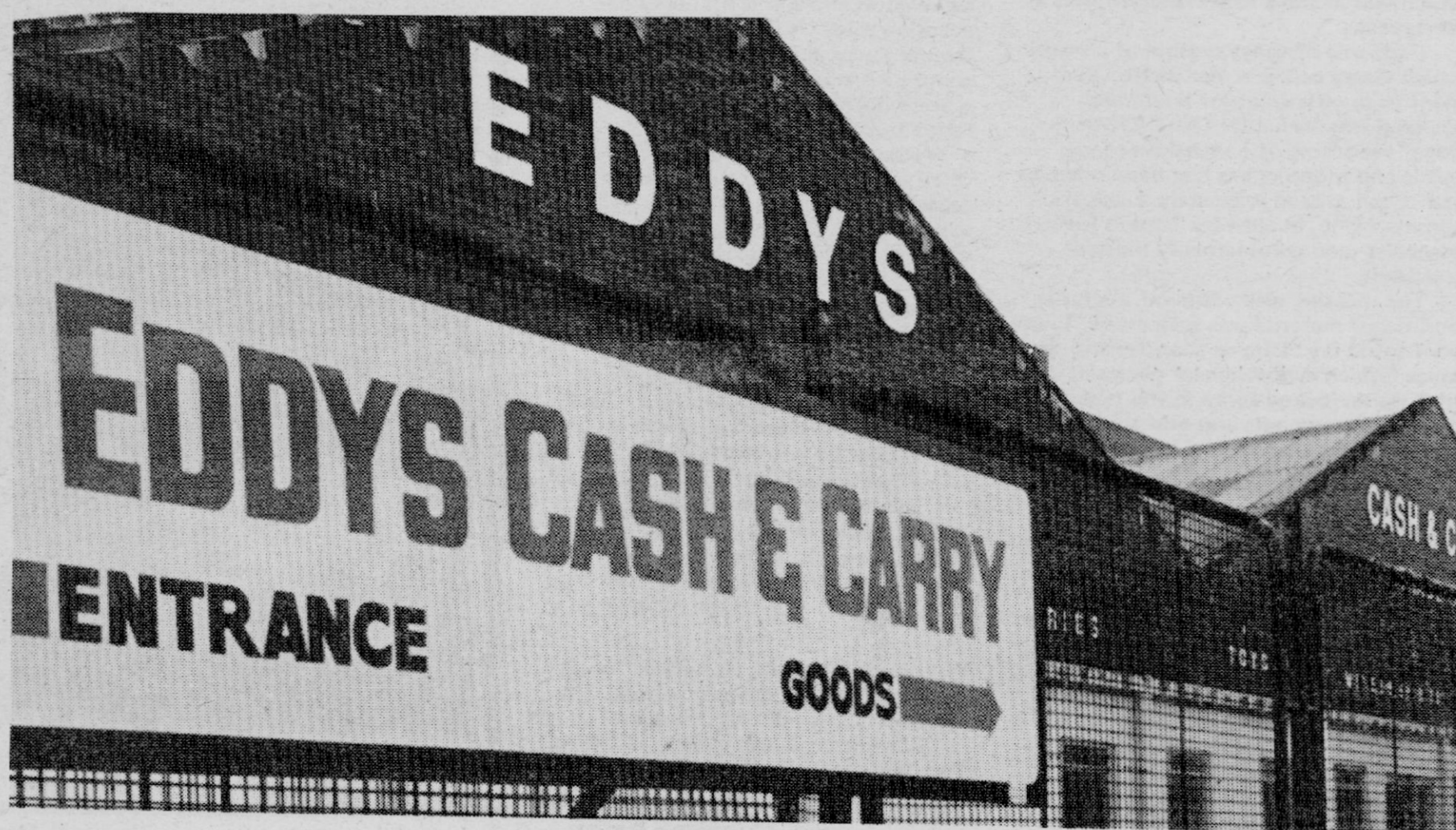
SEARCH WARRANT

The story began the weekend before last Christmas when £30,000-worth of cigarettes and almost £2,000 in cash were reported stolen from Eddy's Warehouse in Derby Road, Bootle.

The following Tuesday (December 23) police called at the home of John Connell with a search warrant. (Connell pleaded guilty to handling stolen property and money from Eddy's warehouse in the Crown Court last month and was sent to prison for two years.)

Connell was told to turn out his pockets by Detective Constable Danny Gidman. He was found to have £144 in banknotes and was arrested. At the police station, according to Gidman's own statement, Detective Gidman demonstrated that second-sight which should one day make him a very famous police officer.

He told Connell the money could be identified if it was from Eddy's warehouse. Connell replied: "I don't think it will, it's old money." Then Gidman said: "We've had occasions lately where people have



Scene of the crime — Eddy's Warehouse in Bootle

written on notes and they have identified their own writing."

Sure enough, this is exactly what happened. A director of Eddy's Warehouse later identified his own writing on two of the notes found on Connell.

According to the police, Connell then went on to tell them where the cigarettes were hidden. Some were under a bridge and the rest had been taken that day to the Hy-Ten Warehouse in Bridle Road, Bootle. Connell alleged that the watchman at Hy-Ten had allowed in a van containing the cigarettes.

The security guard at the Hy-Ten Warehouse was Patrick Sands. Tuesday, December 23, was his first full day back at work after a long illness. He arrived late in the afternoon for the night shift. (Police arrested Connell shortly after 5 p.m., so presumably the cigarettes had been taken to Hy-Ten some time earlier.)

Earlier that day, Hy-Ten had been virtually deserted as workers and management went for a Christmas drink.

NEW PADLOCK

The police searched the warehouse on Christmas Eve when Pat Sands was on duty and the cigarettes were eventually found in a hut inside the warehouse. Sands admitted that he had used the hut in the past to store personal belongings and to watch television.

But he pointed out that there was a new padlock on the hut door which he knew nothing about. Sands had no key, so the police had to cut off the lock to get the door open. Inside, as well as the cigarettes, they found the original lock belonging to Mr Sands. It had been cut through.

What follows seems very strange. The police took the old lock and asked Mr Sands for the key to it.

MYSTERY CLUES

But they left the lock actually found on the shed door lying on the ground. It was Mr Sands' lock and key which the police intended to produce in court.

Fortunately, Mr Sands picked up the new lock to produce in his defence if there was any confusion over which lock was found where. If his own lock had been found on the hut door, things would obviously have looked much worse for him.

HELD OVERNIGHT

Mr Sands, a former military policeman, says he was then taken to Marsh Lane police station, not charged, but released on police bail until January 20. He heard no more from the police until he surrendered to his bail.

At that time he was questioned by Detective Sergeant Humphreys, denied access to his solicitor, detained overnight and charged, inexplicably, with the burglary of Eddy's Warehouse. This was later changed to a handling charge at the magistrates' court.


Not surprisingly, Mr Sands was sacked from his security job at Hy-Ten, though the firm gave stock losses as the reason, rather than his arrest.

The case dragged on and on with the prosecution saying that new evidence would be brought. It never was. All they had was that the stolen cigarettes were found in a shed which Mr Sands had access to — along with every other worker at Hy-Ten.

Detectives Humphreys, Gidman and Durno did not make their statements until May, almost six months

after the arrest. And the final police statement, from Detective Sergeant Albert Gowing of the Regional Crime Squad, was made in October and sent to the defence the day before the trial.

An internal police inquiry is now going on into the Sands case. On past form, it will achieve absolutely nothing. But Mr Sands is considering what other action he can possibly take against Merseyside Police.



OCTOBER BOOKS

4b Temple Court (off Mathew Street) Liverpool 2.

China, Albania, Vietnam Africa, America, Britain: past, present and future.

Books, pamphlets, posters from all over the world

'LIBERTY HALL'

TRITON HOTEL, PARADISE STREET

Members 25p; non-members 35p

Starts: 8 p.m.

Sun Dec 12: RANK AND FILE — film of the television play by Jim Allen.

Sun Dec 19: A PARTY!!

Phone 227 2514 for further details