

# WHAT ARE THESE PEOPLE UP TO?

LIVERPOOL'S Church Street has become a happy hunting ground for people selling everything from transcendental meditation to razor blades.

Not so divine or simple, however, are the young ladies with their clipper boards.

If you've been questioned by them, you might mistakenly believe you've answered a general market research survey. If you've managed to avoid them so far, this article may save you time and money.

**THE GIRLS** are the first stage in a campaign to sell you a 'managed investment plan' - savings and life assurance combined.

Two firms are known to be operating. One is Aslan Davis Limited, who push a scheme run by Liberty Life.

The other - and the one which uses the real high-pressure techniques - is Milldon and Company. Milldon is part of the Schlesinger Group (now called European Investments) which has strong links with South Africa.

Milldon are mainly interested in selling the Trident Fiscal Plan, which is run - not surprisingly - by another Schlesinger company.

The girls in the street ask your age, occupation, details of savings etc., and finally, but most importantly, your telephone number. If you give an office number the girls make 25p; if just a home number they make only 15p.

Now you are a "lead" and can expect to be harassed on the telephone. Littlewoods do not allow Milldon salesmen on their premises, because of constant calls during working hours.

The next stage is a visit by a Milldon expert with all of two weeks' training. He'll be self employed, driving his own car, and determined to sell you a plan to

earn the £2,400 a year he was promised when he started (plus a holiday abroad or a certificate and trophy for the mantelpiece).

One star among the Milldon sales force was con-man Gerry Jackson - until he was jailed recently (see page two). What Jackson knows about investment isn't worth knowing. He went bankrupt a couple of years ago.

Milldon's selling technique is extremely clever. They use what are known in the trade as "strong closing phrases". This means that as you answer their questions you gradually - and unconsciously - commit yourself to taking out an investment plan.

They know how to deal with excuses, too. Men often say they want to discuss the plan with their wife before signing. Salesmen are instructed that when this happens they must belittle the man and suggest he is incapable of making his own decisions "like a man".

Milldon reckon the best chance of making a sale is on the first visit. At the end of an interview some reps just sit, pointing at the form and repeating "Go on, sign it," over and over again.

What they want you to sign is a direct debit form made out to Trident, for your monthly payments and "a single unspecified



amount."

**In other words, you're signing a blank cheque.**

You can cancel it of course, once the salesman has gone. But unless you're quick you'll find an "unspecified amount" has been lifted from your bank.

## GOING UP - OR DOWN

The plan itself includes life assurance, so that you can receive tax relief. This is paid for by the first six months' payments.

After six months, 90% of your contributions (minus 40p a month policy fee) buys units in the fund.

Trident's brochure gives examples of these units increasing in value by 8% or 10% a year. (10% is the maximum firms are legally allowed to quote.)

Only part of the fund's investments are in fixed interest securities - so the units can go down as well

as up. The brochure does point this out in passing.

But what the literature says is one thing. What the sales people tell you may be quite another.

A Free Press reporter, following an interview in the street, was visited by a man and a woman selling the Liberty Life plan.

The woman suggested the growth rate of this investment was likely to be over 10%. In any case, she said, "Growth is guaranteed." She said we shouldn't just take her word for it; it was printed somewhere in the leaflets, but she couldn't find it at the moment. It wasn't, of course.

This type of investment is not

short term as you may be led to believe. If you cancel a Trident plan within two years, you don't get your money back.

If you cancel between two and ten years, you have to pay surrender charges, which are on a reducing scale.

For example, if you pay Trident £10 a month for two years (a total of £240) and want your money back you would get the 'bid value' of the investment after deducting a £140 surrender charge.

If the plan is cashed-in during the first four years, the Inland Revenue will reclaim part or all of the tax relief.



**CUT THIS OUT - AND YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO READ THE NEXT PAGE!**

## Tressell memorial and march

**THE GRAVE** of Robert Tressell, author of the socialist novel, "The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists", will soon be marked with a memorial.

Tressell - real name Robert Phillip Noonan - is buried in a pauper's grave at Walton Park Cemetery.

A 6ft by 3ft slab of black granite is being carved with a bas-relief of Tressell, and some lines of verse that he wrote.

Tressell was a house-painter by trade, and the £850 memorial is being paid for - appropriately - by the building workers' union, UCATT.

On Saturday, June 12 there will be a procession to the grave, leaving Hale Road Labour Club at 12.30. There will be a social afterwards.

Among those invited are Len Murray and Jack Jones.

More details from John Nettleton (521 5797).

The idea of a memorial had been talked about for many years. This latest, successful effort began when Alan O'Toole wrote an article about Tressell in the Free Press in March last year.

## Police press passes cause protests

**JOURNALISTS** on Merseyside are protesting to MPs and the Home Office about an order by the Chief Constable that they must carry Press passes issued by the police.

For many years Press cards issued by the National Union of Journalists and the smaller Institute of Journalists have satisfied both police and armed forces.

The Liverpool branch of the NUJ have asked members to report any cases of discrimination against journalists who use the union's Press card instead of that issued by the police.

At present the police insist they won't discriminate. But if this is true it raises the question why the cards are being issued at all.

The police have offered some unlikely explanations. One is that the Association of Chief Police Officers, which originally recog-

nised the union's card, has since changed its name.

A more credible argument is that the union cards could fall into the wrong hands. On the police card the journalist's photograph is sealed inside a plastic cover, making it difficult to tamper with.

Some journalists' objections are based on principle - that the police card will undermine the status of the union card.

Some are concerned about the form applicants for the police card have to fill in. This asks the journalist's home address. Objectors say the police shouldn't have this information - it should be sufficient to know which paper a journalist represents.

Applicants must supply one photograph for the card, and another one. Those who asked what the second photo was for were told to mind their own business.

## Bobby on the bottle

**SENIOR** police officers were not at all surprised to hear that Chief Constable Ken Oxford had applied (unsuccessfully) for the top job in the Strathclyde force.

Oxford's indulgent drinking habits have long been a talking point among them. And they assume he was simply trying to get closer to the source of Scotch whiskey!

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## LIBERTY HALL

At the Odd Spot (top end of Bold Street) every Sunday, 8 p.m.

Late bar. Members 25p, non-members 40p. All welcome

SEE BACK PAGE FOR EVENTS BEFORE MAY 15.

- May 15 - Goodtime Charlie. Rare visit by this leading jazz quartet from Leeds.
- May 22 - Action on the Falls & the Shankill: Belfast 1969/77. Two speakers... rebel clergymen Des Wilson & Brian Smeaton
- May 29 - "They Shoot Horses Don't They?" - film with Jane Fonda, Michael Sarrazin, Sussannah York.
- June 5 - Red Ladder Theatre Group in "Anybody Sweating?"
- June 12 - Rape: speaker from London Rape Crisis Centre.
- June 19 - Breakdown: Local but unrecognised trio playing excellent contemporary ragtime and blues.
- June 26 - Green Ban Movement. Pete Carter tells how it spread from Australia to Birmingham.
- July 3 - "The Ballad of Joe Hill". Swedish film about the life of Joe Hill, organiser of the one-big-union, IWW.

Membership details: Phone 521 5763 (evening) or 227 2514 (day)