



Lord Widgery hearing evidence on the Derry killings.

# Housing aid plan sabotaged

LIVERPOOL'S FIRST housing aid centre —planned by the city council to continue and expand the work of the SNAP housing project— has been mysteriously sabotaged.

The centre was due to open in the Granby area of Liverpool 8 where housing problems are acute and make up three quarters of all cases dealt with by the social services.

To provide assistance, Liverpool's director of housing, Mr Jim ("I was born in Scotland Road y'know") Hall produced a report last August which emphasised the need for a housing aid centre in Granby.

## PROBLEMS

Housing aid centres are supposed to cut bureaucratic red tape and solve housing problems on the spot without sending people traipsing all over the city from department to department.

Hall stressed the housing situation would get worse as the area's slum clearance programme continued, especially since the SNAP project would finish this month.

He wanted the community

council and residents' organisations to join in the actual planning of the centre and use part of it when it opened.

In September the city council not only approved Hall's report but gave it top priority for urban aid money.

In January this year somebody leaned heavily on Hall and he submitted a report crucifying his previous proposals to the Personnel Committee— which approves new appointments.

The original appointments had enough seniority and autonomy to allow them to solve housing problems on their own initiative. But Hall's latest report cut the staff from five to two and slashed the seniority. Gone, too, were any suggestions that other Corporation departments would install officers in the centre to help co-ordinate the entire effort.

Hall's latest two-man team won't even be able to run the housing aid centre along the limited lines set out by Julian Amery, the right-wing housing minister and private landlord.

All they will be able to do in the face of a stream of housing problems will be to dish out

leaflets and send people on the confusing journey around all the departments.

In drastically revising his plans, Hall hadn't bothered to consult SNAP— whose offer of £6,000 donation had been the carrot that had persuaded Liverpool Corporation to get moving.

## SUITABLE

SNAP were drawing up the contracts for the conversion of the large building they had found suitable for use as a housing centre.

Since Hall's sudden change of mind, the SNAP committee — a board of governors composed of local worthies — have revealed their vested interests in pleasing the Corporation by giving the go-ahead to the new plans.

Their decision was against the advice of SNAP director Des Mc Conaghy, Shelter's National Director John Willis, and SNAP housing manager Don Simpson.

## SAFEGUARD

Don Simpson has now resigned in protest.

And SNAP have again had to step in and safeguard the future of the centre such as it now is. Corporation officers began to dither about their share of the slightly increased cost, and it took SNAP to guarantee the entire cost of the centre to enable it to go ahead.

In one move the so-called housing policy of the Conservative council —which promised one new housing aid centre a year for the next five year — has been stood on its head.

# Poor Mister Wade!

by Bob Daniels

Standfield-Realmdeal tenants in the Holyland, Toxteth, have now organised a united front against Merseyside's biggest slum landlord.

The Holyland tenants (who live in the Toxteth streets named after biblical characters) forced Realmdeal's subsidiary, Grant Improvements Ltd, to negotiate by refusing to let them near their homes.

James Standfield Wade, the wealthy managing director of the Realmdeal Empire, wants the Holyland properties improved so that he can rake in thousands of pounds of public money in grants.

The tenants told Wade to stay away until he gives them two assurances — that he will obtain fair rent certificates for all homes to be improved, and re-introduce compensation for disturbance during the improvements.

Last November the benevolent Mr Wade attended a meeting of 70 Holyland tenants affected by his plans to improve houses in the area.

He promised them the earth: Temporary re-housing, with the removal and storage of all furniture; no rent to be paid during improvements; £1 a head per week living allowance for staying with friends or relatives.

And if the improvements weren't completed within the three week deadline, the rash Mr Wade promised to pay residents £1 a day per house for every day over the three weeks.

Unhappily for Mr Wade the improvements due to be completed early in December dragged on and on, and some of them were still being finished in early March.

Stung for more than a few hundred pounds, Wade wrote to the tenants of houses still to be

## Realmdeal tenants are hurting his pocket

improved and withdrew his offers of compensation.

"There is just no money available," said the shapely Miss Ann Mitchell (now promoted to the company's Chief Public Relations Officer) in her circular to the tenants.

A strange comment, this, when Standfield advertise in the Echo regularly offering to buy houses and stating "Large funds available".

All the compensation for disturbance was withdrawn, and tenants facing damage by contractors working for Grant Improvements Ltd have been told to fight the matter out with the contractors.

Wade has since pointed out that he was wrongly advised on the completion dates by his then contracts manager, Mr A Briscoe. Mr Briscoe has since been placed in the out-tray.

For the time being, Wade's improvement machine has ground to a halt, faced by the determined Holyland tenants.

Another spanner may have been thrown in the works by the Corporation's inspectors, who are reported to be unenthusiastic about the quality of the improvement work completed so far.

Now the tenants have forced Wade to agree to obtain fair rent certificates. But Wade is still refusing to waive the rent for more than eight weeks, and he wants the tenants to stay in their houses while the improvements are being done. The tenants want to be temporarily re-housed in the vacant houses in the Holyland.

Wade has also turned awkward on giving the tenants removal costs.

The tenants are now demanding that no further houses are improved until those now in the hands of the contractors are finished, and are calling for strict corporation supervision of all work by Grant Improvements Ltd.

● Realmdeal tenants in the Holyland who want to protect their interests should contact the Holyland Street Representatives Committee, 287 Mill St, L'pool 8.

## But you can park here...

THE CLOSURE of Cooper's grocery store in Church St (only a fortnight after the manager had dismissed all closure rumours) moved the Liverpool Echo to a heartfelt plea on behalf of business interests.

Cooper's parent company, Fine Fare, blamed the closure on lack of car parking space, even though most people realised the real reason — the shop didn't fit in with Fine Fare's trading methods.

But the Echo swallowed the manager's excuse. They obviously hadn't noticed the huge 1,000-space car park which the Corporation is building only 50 yards from Cooper's doorway.

## ECHO MAN WINS AWARD

This month's Whitewash Award for Journalism (kindly donated by Messrs Whitewash Ltd) has been awarded to Mr Derek Whale for his portrait of Kirkby, "a happy, settled community" published in the Liverpool Echo on March 15.

In his adjudication, the chairman of the judges, Mr Elbur G. Whitewash Jnr, said: "The fact that Mr Whale skilfully avoided discussion of Kirkby's serious social problems,

including unemployment [about one person in five] in no way detracts from the outstanding merit of the article — if anything it enhances it.

"The overall picture is bright and cheerful — just like our product, Whitewash".

Nominations for future awards should be sent (with cuttings) to The Whitewash Award for Journalism, c/o Liverpool Free Press, 24 Wapping, Liverpool 1.

## HORSE SENSE



by GEORGE

# Making the best of systems

THERE ARE MANY types of systems that can be used in racing and they vary a great deal from the purely statistical to old wives' tales. System application also depends on the amount of capital available to work it, and what returns the punter is expecting.

There are very few profitable systems and these show only small returns for sometimes big outlays. My intention therefore is really to point out systems that we should avoid (although they may appear logical) and at the same time draw out of them the good part to link up with other knowledge to make the correct choice in our final selection.

A system that is often put forward as a profitable one is when a horse is entered in four or more races in one week. It is argued that the trainer will pick the best race for that particular animal, and on the face value of that

it would be a good conclusion. It does not work however, and on checking past seasons, on a level stake basis only about 20% of these animals win.

Another popular system that can catch out the unwary punter is the backing of horses that were only beaten by a narrow margin last time out. (half a length or less), and also those that were unlucky in running, i.e. slow start, swerving, getting boxed in etc. It would appear that all these animals are fit and trying but on checking we find that only 15% to 20% do in actual fact win next time out. So this system can result in heavy losses.

Backing horses that win or are placed and run again within the same week is the basis of another system that appears to be a good investment. The idea is that the animal is fit and tuned up to win another race about

the same time — and most popular racing dailies carry a column to let you know which horses fit into this category. But again, on checking, we find that only about 15%—20% win within this seven day period.

To conclude, then, we may realise that although most systems by themselves produce heavy losses, there is some logical reason behind most of them. So if we can use the knowledge of all of them together it may help us to produce winners:

- Find out the percentage of winners a system produces before being totally committed to it.
- Use the cold logic in any systems to help find winners, together with a study of the form book, trainer, course, going, etc.
- Never chase your losses.

NEXT MONTH: More about systems.