

SERGEANT PALTREY



"...whereupon I was forced to restrain the accused with my truncheon..."



"...and in the ensuing struggle he fell down the bridewell steps injuring..."



When your doctor takes time off...

Every night a handful of doctors arrive at an office in Shaw Street, Liverpool, and pick up a two-way radio telephone and a black bag containing medical supplies.

Then for up to twelve hours these doctors drive around the city looking after the patients of GPs who have taken the weekend or evening off.

At certain times of the night no more than five doctors are responsible for coping with the emergency needs of over ¾ million people.

Sometimes the doctors drive themselves, sometimes they have a chauffeur. The nerve centre of the whole operation is the Shaw St. office where the doctors' instructions are sent out over the radio and a medical supervisor is on duty.

Each call takes on average 50 to 55 minutes, which is surprisingly fast considering a doctor may have to rush from places such as Bootle and Kirkby to Speke or Netherley.

Not all calls are handled so speedily although there are one or two stand-bys on duty in case there is a sudden rush of emergency GP calls.

One GP has told the Free Press of a case where an elderly woman collapsed in Speke. The relatives thought the matter urgent, but no mobile deputy appeared before several hours were up.

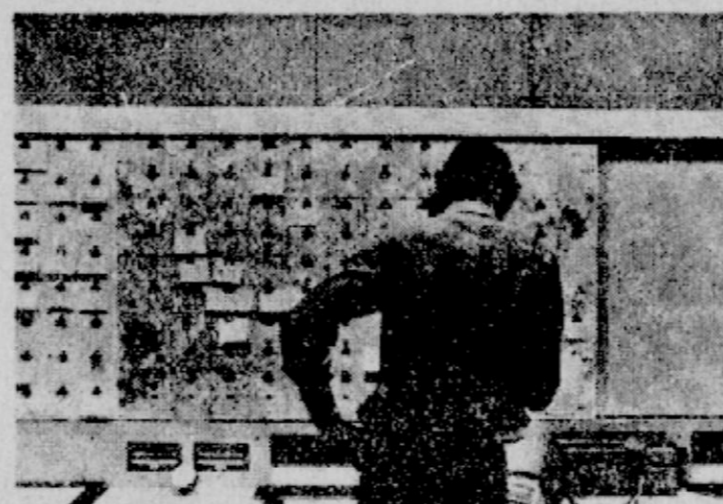
At certain times of the night no more than five doctors are responsible for coping with the emergency needs of over three-quarters of a million people.

About 85% of Liverpool's 300 doctors use this stand-in service.

Liverpool Locums Ltd. was set up in August 1964 by three directors, Dr John Maxwell, his wife Sybil, and wholesale jeweller Mr Arnold Sherman.

By March 31 1970 the company were making a steady profit. Company records show that for the financial year 1969-70 the directors received the handy sum of £11,558 between them in fees. On top of this they made a profit of £4,554. Not too bad considering the directors also have several other interests.

Dr. Maxwell has his own GP practice run from Shaw St. and is a director of a company called R C Shingler. Arnold



Sherman is also director of his family firm, P Sherman and Sons Ltd.

Obviously there is money to be made running relief services for GPs. Doctor Maxwell and Mr Sherman are also directors of Birmingham Locums Ltd and Central Relief Services (London) and

formed Cheshire Locums Ltd in June 1971.

The way these locum services have mushroomed leaves one wondering why private firms are allowed to cash in on a service which could be provided by the National Health Service.

Their success shows that such facilities are needed but recently a number of doctors have voiced doubts about the way some are run. And they have been pressing the government to impose minimum standards.

The Department of Health has decreed that no GP may make "excessive" use of a relief service or use one at all without the permission of their local executive councils.

A local doctor who acts as press officer for the BMA assured the Free Press that the Executive Council kept a constant eye on the Liverpool Locums service and had to approve every relief doctor. However a spokesman for the Council said: "There is a very simple procedure for doctors to obtain approval for the use of a deputising service."

"We haven't set a maximum time doctors can use the relief service. We leave it to the doctors to act responsibly in this matter. The local service has proved to be excellent."

"No, we haven't carried out a review of the service for several years, there's been no reason to.

Both doctors and patients find it excellent."

This compares rather poorly with the Inner London Executive Council, which lays down that no doctor is to use relief services more than two nights and one half day a week, plus every other weekend.

The Middlesex E. C. allows 40 calls per thousand patients on the doctor's list.

CHEAP

However the Liverpool GPs can use the service every night and every weekend if they wish. It is a cheap way of having plenty of time off and allows some to concentrate on private patients.

The maximum a doctor with 3,000 patients need pay for the service if he wants to take every night and weekend off would be £42.90 a month. This is a business expense and is offset against tax, which would be at least 40p in the £.

Clearly most doctors in Liverpool have decided they can afford these charges — especially since the average wage of a GP is over £8,000 a year.

The most worrying aspect of the growth of locum services is that there are no legal checks on their standards. So doctors have to take it on trust that the deputies are competent.

It's a family affair

Bootle Labour Party is often thought of as one big happy family.

And after the recent council elections no-one can dare say this isn't true. For Labour party politics in Bootle really are a family affair — and the family is growing bigger and bigger... and bigger.

Four of the Labour Councillors recently elected have some family connection with other Bootle councillors, and one is related to the MP.

Mrs Elizabeth Hearty was elected in Sefton Ward. Her husband is Bootle councillor Joe Hearty.

Mrs Mazie Weston is now a councillor. Her husband is Councillor Alec Weston.

Other new councillors include Joe Morley, brother of Councillor Margaret Morley, and Councillor P F Mc Mahon, son of Councillor F L McMahon.

And finally the well-known Mahon family were not to be outdone. Mr Jimmy Mahon, relative of Labour MP Simon Mahon also gained a seat.

Misery in the middle

Liverpool Corporation have said they will build no more high-rise flats in the city. But it's the mid-rise flats that are the problem for tenants in Southdene, Kirkby.

The Southdene Flat Dwellers Association claim that some of them have lived in this sort of flats for almost 20 years and it is only now that the corporation are asking if they are satisfied.

Clearly they are not satisfied. Lack of privacy and space, vandalism and general inconvenience make life intolerable for many flat dwellers in Southdene.

So intolerable, they claim, that some tenants are uprooting themselves from friends and neighbours and moving out of the town they've helped to build.

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Simpler abortions...

Abortion can be safe, simple and free from side-effects on a woman's mental and physical health. This was the message of a film shown at a public meeting on abortion and contraception held at the Co-op hall in Park Road.

The technique illustrated was the Karman method which has been used for some years in American clinics, and has been pioneered in England at two London hospitals — but conservatism among doctors has prevented it being used more widely.

The Karman method could revolutionise abortion in this country. Used up to twelve weeks' pregnancy, it is an extremely safe and simple technique — unlike some of the primitive 'cut and scrape' methods favoured by many doctors. The abortion is carried out without elaborate equipment, can take as little as two minutes, and does not require the woman to stay in hospital overnight. Most important of all is the counselling the woman receives before she has an abortion. By talking over her problems and the reasons why she needs an abortion with a sympathetic counsellor, she is able to work out for herself whether she really wants the abortion. If she decides to have it, she is able to see the experience as a positive step

from which she can go on to take control of her own life and her own body — a contrast to the humiliating and punitive atmosphere encountered by many women in hospitals at present, which can leave them feeling depressed and guilty.

It was suggested at the meeting that this new method could completely remove the need for women to pay huge sums for private abortions, or turn to back-street abortionists. Specialised

clinics could be set up under the National Health Service, making abortion available free for every woman who requested it. Liverpool women must ask themselves why such clinics have not already been set up; why doctors seem to prefer to see women worn out by bringing up too many children, or seriously ill from back-street abortions, rather than change their old-fashioned ideas about abortion.

and not so simple ones

A personal view of what a woman needing an abortion can go through was given by two women at the same meeting.

One said her boyfriend didn't want to know when she found she was pregnant. She ended up paying £150 which she couldn't really afford for a very painful operation in a private clinic.

Another woman tried a back-street abortionist, hot baths, gin... none of them worked and she ended up having the baby, and experiencing the loneliness and poverty of an unsupported mother.

Even with the 1967 Abortion Act, women in Liverpool — and in many other

places — are still being denied abortions, forced to bring up unwanted children or turn to back-street abortionists.

In its evidence to the government inquiry into the working of the abortion Act, the Women's Abortion and Contraception Campaign gives the story of a Liverpool woman: "Her doctor wouldn't help her to get an abortion. His reaction to her was disgust. She was made to feel wicked."

"Her health was considerably affected by having the baby. She was ill during pregnancy, lost one stone in weight after delivery. She still feels that she would have had the abortion if she had been able to."