



# 'If you really want the job you lie about your children'

An interview with five working women, three shop floor workers from Plesseys, an office worker and a shop assistant. The women at Plesseys inspect electrical components for faults. All are married and work part-time.

**Are there any men working in your department?**

**Phyllis:** Well, it's mostly women now although when we first started the men were on faults, but they took them off that, and put us on at a lower grade of pay for doing exactly the same job. The men at the department at the moment just walk around.

**Are they foremen?**

**Shirley:** No, not exactly, they're just over us to make sure we do our job properly.

**Are these positions filled by women as well?**

**Gladys:** We've one woman at the moment who's a group leader, who's very good. But generally a man's better in that sort of job.

**Do any of you do shift work?**

**Phyllis:** Yes, some do six till ten but they get a different rate of pay. They work 20 hours and get paid for 24.

**Is there any one job in your department that's done by both men and women?**

**Phyllis:** A woman works a press from six till ten and a man during the day. And he gets about £13 a week more.

When we've inspected our work it goes to another girl who looks for faults we've missed. And then, believe it or not, there are two men who then re-check it. And they're on about five grades higher pay.

It just doesn't make sense. We do all that work checking about 12,000 joints a day.

At one time I worked in the machine shop and I could do about 4,500 parts a day. The foreman said: "If you can do that we may as well get somebody else." So he put a man on it who could do no more than 2,000 but was picking up £10 a week more than me. So they took him off and put me back on for my lousy £7 or £8 a week.

**Is your union representative a man or a woman?**

**Gladys:** We've got a man. A woman tends to back down too easy. If the boss says "You go back and tell them to behave themselves and get on with the job" she will. But a man will say No.

**Do any of you pay a National Insurance stamp?**

**Shirley:** Most of us pay Industrial Injuries contribution because it's so much cheaper. But it only covers us for injury, and not while we're off sick. But if a person is single and then gets married she'll carry on paying her full stamp because when she has a baby she gets all the benefits.

**Hettie:** Even when I was paying a full stamp after working full time I couldn't get any money.

I applied for part-time work. There were no vacancies. So I had to go down twice a week to the dole.

After about six weeks I asked for some money but they said I was not entitled to it as I was now applying for part-time work.

I'd worked full-time all my life and never got a penny, who the Hell would apply for part-time work if they knew that?

Another time I had a threatened miscarriage and had to go into hospital but couldn't get a maternity grant afterwards as I was two stamps short. Hardly my fault, since I'd

been in hospital.

I offered to pay them. They refused. Then I appealed and was told I had no case.

**What happens to women expecting children, are they able to stay off and return to their jobs again?**

**Phyllis:** Well, you can ask for leave, but most just pack up. Very few actually come back.

**Gladys:** They're usually sorry then because they can't get a job again, having young children.

**Hettie:** Yes, that's very true. If you go for a job they always ask how many children and what ages.

So if you really want the job you have to be prepared to lie about your children's ages.

The problem is that there are so few nurseries. They know that, and you are more likely to be off work.

**Phyllis:** Just before the school holidays come up everyone's told, "If you're off, that's it." If they had nursery groups there wouldn't be any need for all this.

**Have the firm ever been asked to provide a play group?**

**Phyllis:** Years ago they had a big survey, even showed us where it was going to be. But jobs were easy to get then. Now they can get school leavers they don't have to bother.

**Hettie:** When I had to go into hospital to have an operation my husband and I were separated and I didn't know what to do with the children. What I wanted was a home help for half a day per day.

The Welfare said I'd have to pay. When I said I couldn't they sent me to the almoner at the hospital.

She said the children would have to go into care. Now it costs £12 a week per child in care and all I needed was a home help for half a day.

So I then went to Social Security but they wouldn't help. And the children had to go into care.

After I came out of hospital they came for the money in a taxi. A taxi! I was disgusted. There is no such thing as a welfare state for a working woman, without her husband behind her.

The wit and wisdom of



George Cregeen

## Kirkb them

**KIRKBY HAS** discovered its soul. The proof lies in the rose gardens and flower beds which adorn the town centre. Not so long ago, they would not have remained for more than twenty-four hours.

Pity that visitors to the town's car parks should be besieged by small boys and girls with buckets of dirty water demanding a couple of bob to "wash the car while you're away." The looks that accompany a refusal almost qualify the exercise as demanding money with menaces. Or, perhaps, Lancashire County Police have not noticed?

Daily Post, August 15, 1970

**NEARLY HALF** the girls attending an Essex Sex Advice Clinic are still at school and paying their visits behind parents' backs, says the organiser. "Even girls of fourteen and fifteen have intercourse with their boy friends these days, but we cannot help them because it is illegal," she says.

And a good job, too, or there might be more of it. What a pity some of the parents could not find out what these misguided people are telling their daughters in the name of our misguided permissive society.

Daily Post, August 29, 1970

# How to heckle in 4 languages at once

If you burst into the Adelphi Hotel during the first few days of June and heckle the World Congress of the International Federation for Housing and Planning you'll be simultaneously translated into four different languages.

According to Mr Jim Amos, city planning officer, Liverpool was chosen as the venue for this lavish Congress "because the President was so impressed by the city's policy of consulting people about planning."

An ironic tribute -- if you look closely at the Congress programme it states: "Congress participation fee £35: Federation members and UK delegates £29. Accompanying ladies £8."

Just like in the affairs of

Liverpool, participation isn't all it's made out to be.

If you want to participate further you could go on a study-tour of nine British new towns -- that'll cost you £190 all-in for eleven days.

A little expensive? How about the Congress's cheaper package tours: a five day Conservation tour will run you £85, five days looking at British urban renewal projects will cost you the same, as will five days looking at housing developments up and down the country.

Although not mentioned anywhere in the programme a two-hour tour of Liverpool's urban

destruction programme will cost delegates a 20p return bus-ride.

A protest to Amos from Polytechnic staff and students, who didn't like the exclusive nature of the congress brought some small concessions -- a few free, and cheap rate places, just like they do at Eton.

As threatened a counter-conference is being held in the form of Liverpool Unlimited -- a week of community activities and discussions, which will be simultaneously free to everyone, including Congress delegates.

## Builders under the bed

Building workers on Merseyside who are fighting for better pay and conditions and against the use of scab labour might be interested in the comments of Mr Martin Grafton, Director-General of the National Federation of Building Trade Employers.

In a recent speech he stated that 'scores of Communist militants' are being trained in East Germany to infiltrate the building unions.

And many of them are here already, says Grafton. -- a number of these Communist-trained militants do not hold any trade union office at all!

Get out from under Mr Grafton's bed, lads.

## Oops, sorry!

The bulldozers arrived at Norwood Grove, Sheil Park, recently to start knocking it down. Unfortunately the Corporation had forgotten that there was one occupier still there there awaiting payment of his claim for compensation.

Hurried telephone calls, muttered apologies, and the bulldozer came to a stop.

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## Community action mag

"Community Action" is a new magazine devoted to planning, housing and other issues that affect people.

Issue No 2 is a mixture of grass roots comment on the politics of planning and a fair bit of jargon from the professional planners.

The aim of the group producing it is to give technical advice and assistance to action groups in 'low-income' areas. Copies from: 9 Pattison Road, London NW 2. Price: 15p plus postage.

