

GOING UP

(AND UP!)

The Liverpool Echo was aghast. "Price of Fish up by 26%" it proclaimed on July 4 in a front page headline 10 inches wide and 3½ inches deep.

"If fish prices go on rising, fish and chips may be classed as a luxury," it went on.

And so too (it might have added) will the newspaper you wrap them in. For three days later came news of an even more dramatic price rise — 33.3%

Curiously, this time the headline measured only 1¼ inches wide by five-eighths of an inch deep, and simply said: "The Echo."

"Owing to increased costs" Liverpool's most profitable newspaper was going up to 4p.



MR LAWRENCE COMES CLOSE TO DISASTER

Michael Lawrence, a Bootle lecturer, hired an 850 cc Mini from B & B Car Hire, of Leece Street, Liverpool, last November.

In four days the car needed five AA calls and a whole day in a garage. Twice it brought Mr Lawrence and his family close to disaster — once when the engine cut out in the overtaking lane of the M6 (the distributor had not been waterproofed) and a few hours later, at 70 m.p.h. on a clear, dry road, the throttle stayed open as the driver tried to slow for a series of Z-bends.

When it rained, a steady stream of water poured into the car via the passenger door; the heater wouldn't work; after a few hours the wind-screen wipers would not switch off; the battery leads were corroded; two lights failed; the exhaust pipe worked loose; the horn wouldn't work; the fan belt was so worn it had to be replaced; and the tax disc was missing.

When Mr Lawrence made his views about the car known to the company, he was told by the manager that so far as he was concerned

all their cars left their garage in A1 condition. He pointed out that Mr Lawrence had signed a form stating that he had checked the car and found it to be satisfactory. The hiring agreement had been presented to him when it was too late to make alternative arrangements and this merely advised the hirer to check bodywork blemishes, oil, water, tyres and lights. In the event Mr Lawrence had to ask three times before a mechanic checked the oil and water. Most of the faults listed could not have been detected during a static examination.

Mr Lawrence would have returned the car on its first day of hire but he was stranded on the M6 when the firm's offices closed for the weekend. Legal advice was that the firm's hiring agreement was a good deal more water-tight than their car, and if Mr Lawrence had not driven through the night from Southampton to return the car on time, he would have been liable for a £50 penalty.

B & B advertise themselves as "The Finest Self-Drive Car Hire Service In The North".

A tricky form of medical

A word of warning about life insurance companies which don't insist on a medical examination before you take a policy out.

Usually, if you want a policy, a doctor has to look at you and weigh up whether you're likely to live long enough to pay the company lots of premiums.

There's also an easier (and trickier) way. Some firms just send you a questionnaire about your health.

Avoiding payment

But suppose you die a year or two after getting insured? The company may go to great lengths to try and avoid paying up. They'll ask your doctor if there was anything wrong with you at the time you got insured... anything the doctor had not told you about... anything you had forgotten to put on the form.

And if there was, you might as well not have been insured in the first place.

A very juicy story...

When you buy a tin of fruit how do you know how much fruit is inside — and how much juice?

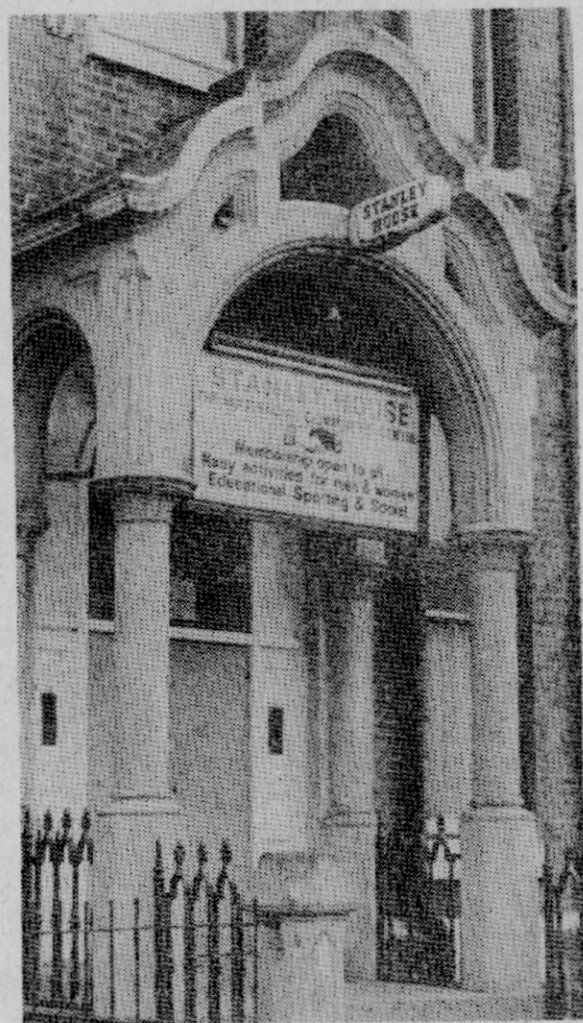
The answer: You don't. Because the labels rarely state the solid fruit content.

West Sussex County Consumer Protection Committee has been busy draining off the juice of 125 cans. In one variety of tinned

strawberries they found only 36.2% was solid fruit. But in some fruit cocktail and mandarin/orange cans the fruit content was as high as 64.7%.

The solution would be to change the labelling system to include more information. Until then, if you really want to avoid being done, take a tin-opener to the supermarket!

There is growing concern and anger over the lack of facilities for young people in Liverpool 8. This was made worse by the closure of the coffee bar at Stanley House in Upper Parliament Street. Here, Chris Elphick, a youth worker in the area, gives his views on what is wrong with the centre...



Stanley House

IN THE EARLY forties Stanley House (Merseyside) Ltd was created mainly by a group of white philanthropists, along with a smattering of Liverpool's early immigrants, to try to establish facilities for 'coloured people and their friends.'

The affairs of the limited company are managed by Stanley House Council. Sir Joseph Cleary has been chairman of this since the company was formed 27 years ago.

There are 33 people on the council — of these only nine live in or near Liverpool 8, less than half use Stanley House regularly and less than a third are coloured.

Anyone may be a member of Stanley House Ltd — the cost is £1.50 a year and the council must consist of people who have paid that amount. In fact a large proportion of the present council haven't paid and nowhere in the community centre are people informed of their rights to become a company member (and so obtain voting rights).

The main thing that Stanley House Ltd has done is set up Stanley House Community Centre. The affairs of the centre are managed by an executive committee of nine people, only one of whom lives in

"FOR THE BENEFIT OF POORER CLASSES"

Liverpool 8. Just over half the committee use the centre regularly and a third are coloured.

Anyone can use the centre but only members can use the bar. To become a member you must pay 50p and accept that your membership can be terminated by the executive at any time, without notice or reason.

The staff of the centre consist of a full-time warden and assistant warden, a part-time secretary, bar maid, cleaners and a caretaker. Only one member of the staff is coloured. The warden is Mr Fred Taylor, a fully trained general contractor, who is white and lives in Anfield.

The aims of Stanley House, laid down in 1947, include these:

1. To provide educational, cultural and recreational advantages and amenities for the poorer classes of coloured people and people of mixed blood... and white relations and friends of such coloured people and their friends.
2. To provide the means of promoting the moral, mental and physical well-being of poorer classes of coloured children and those of mixed blood and their friends — to provide facilities for educational and physical training classes and youth organisations.
3. To promote the rights and welfare of poorer classes of coloured people and people of mixed blood and the study of all problems arising out of the existence of such a coloured population in British cities with a view to the solution thereof.

warden refused to allow the course to continue in Stanley House. He refused to take into account the obvious problems one would expect to encounter, and said that he had expected 'proper students', not the 'element of riff-raff that had come.'

Last summer the youth club was run very successfully by local young people — a full-time youth worker was appointed in September. His aim was to continue and encourage the idea of community control. There were many problems but in February this year the club opened six days a week, 12 hours a day under democratic group control. The idea was to provide simply a place for young people, many of whom were unemployed, to go, and to create, maybe, a jumping-off point for future ideas and action.

Large numbers of people of all ages attended each day. Obviously there was bound to be an increase in problems. Unfortunately, however hard we tried, we were unable to get Stanley House authorities and the police to see the situation

"The need for more and better provision of every type of social facility and service in the inner areas of big cities should need no elaboration by us. Yet it seems that there is apathy towards the recognition of the urgency of these needs. This neglect leads to an intensification of colour problems because most coloured people tend to live in deprived conditions." — 'Special but not Separate'

What goes on

With these aims in mind here is a brief summary of what goes on at Stanley House at the moment:

It is open for seven days a week from 7 p.m. to 10.30 p.m.

The main facility is the bar in which there is a TV and a juke box. Table tennis, billiards and dominoes are the other main activities. Rooms are hired out for dances, judo, meetings, children's dancing classes, etc.

There is a senior citizens' lounge and two cricket teams are run from the centre. Apart from dances, often fewer than 12 people use the centre each night.

The warden has plans for an over 18s club, playgroups and, eventually, some kind of youth work.

Apart from special activities like the children's dancing class, no-one under 18 uses the building, and when locally born coloured youngsters have used the bar they have often been insulted by the members of staff.

A social science course designed to study the problems of Liverpool 8 started at the centre in April. This was run by Mr Okeem, lecturer in sociology at the Polytechnic, and financed completely by the Workers' Educational Association. The unique fact was that this course was for people under the age of 18 and that it was held in Liverpool 8. However, after two classes the

from our point of view — they refused to accept that it was remarkable that these youngsters should be using a building at all.

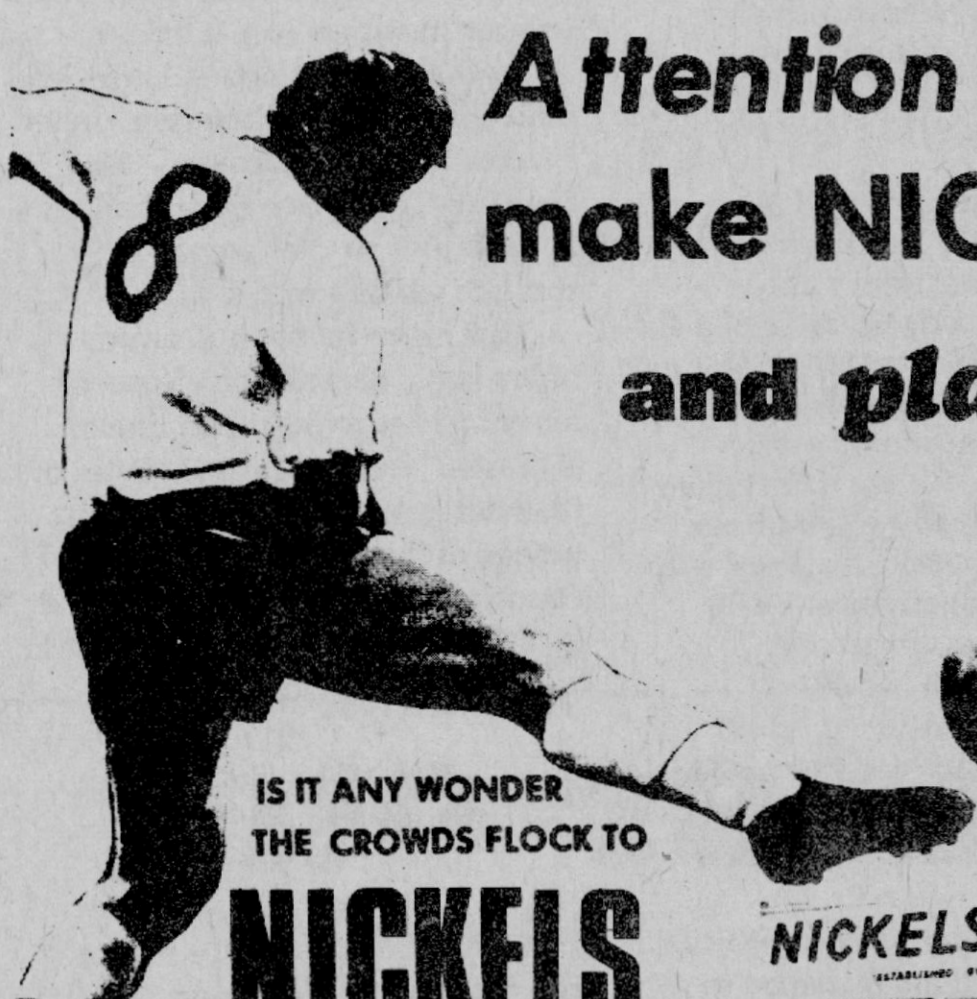
Shortly before Easter an incident took place near the club which resulted in five uniformed police entering uninvited. This started resentment among the young people. The executive closed the coffee bar temporarily and eventually the youth club management committee closed it finally.

There is now no youth work in Stanley House and little in the Granby Street area.

There were severe problems, some of which were of our own making. However our main problems were the attitudes of the centre, its staff and committees and the attitudes of the police.

In the 'Special but not Separate' report of 1968 Stanley House is mentioned twice — both times the attitude is that the centre is of vital importance to future work with black people. Recent press reports suggest Mr Taylor's future aims are to create merely a 'nice' building safely away from the controversial problems of the area.

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