

THE PLOUGH

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SOUTH DOWN/SOUTH ARMAGH'S OWN REPUBLICAN PAPER

VOLUME 3

Number 6



**A
SPIRIT
THUS OUTRAGED
WILL EVER TURN
AND COME AGAIN
DEMANDING
JUSTICE**



A SHORT STORY

The famous explorer, Dr. Emery Hornsnagle, in his recent book, "Strange Customs of the People of Yap Yap", makes some interesting observations on the practice of free speech among the inhabitants of that little known island.

While being interviewed in the palace of IGGY Bumbum (High Chief), the Slobob of Yap Yap, Dr. Hornsnagle asked the ruler whether the free expression of public sentiment was allowed by the law. "Yes, indeed," replied the Slobob. "The people of our island have absolute freedom of speech and the Government is conducted in exact conformity to public opinion".

"Just how does that work?" asked Dr. Hornsnagle. "That is very simple," explained the Slobob. "Whenever any policy has to be decided, we assemble the entire population in the large courtyard of the palace. The High Priest then reads from a scroll to inform them of the business at hand. When that is finished, I determine the will of my people by listening to the Golden Trumpets."

"And what are the Golden Trumpets?" asked Hornsnagle. "Golden Trumpets," said the Slobob, "are the only means by which public opinion may be expressed. I raise my right hand above my head and call out: 'All those in favour blow.' Instantly all those in favour of the proposed action blow upon Golden Trumpets. Then I raise my left hand and call out: 'All those opposed, blow.' This time the opposition blows Golden Trumpets. The side making the loudest noise is naturally the majority and the issue is decided in their favour."

"That," said Dr. Hornsnagle, "is to my mind the most complete democracy I have ever heard of. I would like very much to witness one of these expressions of public opinion and take some photographs." On the next afternoon, Dr. Hornsnagle had the opportunity he desired. The people of the whole island were assembled in the palace courtyard to decide an

The Slobob now lifted his left hand. "All those opposed, blow," he shouted. Not a sound came from the giant assemblage. "It is so decided," announced the Slobob, and the affair was over.

Later on, Dr. Hornsnagle asked the Slobob why the four wealthy citizens were the only ones to blow trumpets. "They are the only ones who can afford to own Golden Trumpets," explained the Slobob. "The rest are only poor working people." "That doesn't seem very much like free speech to me," remarked Hornsnagle. "All it amounts to is a group of rich men blowing their own horns. In Ireland we have real public expression."

"Is that so?" exclaimed the Slobob. "And how do you do it in Ireland?" "In Ireland," said Hornsnagle, "instead of having Golden Trumpets, we have newspapers, magazines and broadcasting stations." "That is very interesting," said the Slobob. "But who owns these newspapers, magazines and broadcasting stations?" "The rich men," replied Hornsnagle.

"Then it is the same as Yap Yap," said the Slobob. "It is the rich men blowing their own horns that make all the noise." important issue. They numbered about 3,000 and were all quite naked except for loin cloths. However, just before the ceremony was about to begin, four richly clothed gentlemen were carried in on bejewelled litters. Glittering with priceless gems and reeking with perfume, they were deposited at the very front of the crowd, where they squatted on silken pillows and were fanned with peacock feathers by attendants.

"Who are they?" asked Hornsnagle. "They," replied the Slobob, "are the richest men on the island." Immediately after the arrival of the wealthy class, the High Priest read off his scroll. Then the Slobob stepped forward and raised his right hand. "All those in favour, blow," he shouted. The four wealthy citizens all lifted golden trumpets and blew lustily.

TRADITIONAL MUSIC NIGHT AT REPUBLICAN SOCIAL CLUB

Wednesday night has become the night for Traditional Irish music at the Republican Social Club in Newry when some of our very fine local musicians gather together to play, or just to listen, to whatever tunes the crack brings up. This sort of setting does more justice to traditional music than a concert hall because Irish music is a social occasion and not just a performance.



SACK THIS MAN

With today's cost of living, one of the hardest problems facing parents is to clothe themselves and their children. For those on Supplementary Benefit that task becomes impossible. For this reason, Supplementary Benefit provides a grant towards clothing which can be applied for periodically. These are called Exceptional Needs Grants. Dole Offices in Britain, and in certain areas in Belfast, pay these at regular intervals, usually once a year and more often where necessary for children. The Newry Dole Office turns down 96% of all claims, regardless of circumstances on the grounds that the Claimant has to cover the cost of clothing from his weekly payments.

If this state of affairs is not bad enough, the problem is made worse by the attitude of the Chairman of the local Appeals Tribunal. The Chairman of these Tribunals is a Mr. William Telford, who is supposed to act as an independant Chairman over the other two members, who are, one representative from the Trade Union Movement and one Employers' representative.

If one of these representatives does not attend, then the Tribunal can still take place. If the vote is split over a case then Mr. Telford can use his casting vote. This he nearly always does against the Claimant's appeal. In fact, it is classed as a good day if two appeals are upheld and it is not unusual for all of them to be rejected. Mr. Telford also takes sadistic delight in demoralising the Claimants who are appealing. He often demands to know why they have children they cannot afford to support and accuses them of being lazy to work. His whole attitude towards the Claimant is so arrogant and obnoxious it can only be designed to put people off from ever appealing a decision again.

The question arises who is this Mr. Telford who has set himself as god almighty judging the needs of working class people not upon the facts as his is supposed to do but on his own personal prejudices? He is a solicitor by profession and although he is no longer active in that field he still has a reasonable income from his business. The reason he is no longer active as a solicitor is because he is the Chairman of between three and five Tribunals a week and for this he gets £20 per day. This gives him an added income of between £60 and £100 per week. He has a large car and lives in a fine house on the Downshire Road. This is the man who tells Claimants that they can adequately feed and cloth a family on £30 per week. A man who openly condemns people who through no fault of their own are forced to live on public money when he receives three times as much public money per week, willingly.

In view of this appalling state of affairs the people of Newry, whether unemployed or not, should demand that Mr. Telford be removed from his position as Chairman of the Appeals Tribunal. Also, an enquiry should be started into the policy of the Newry Dole Office in turning down, almost out of hand, claims for Exceptional Needs Grants. The people of this area suffer enough without these added abuses.

POLITICAL PRISONERS

For most people, Christmas is a good time which is associated with our families and friends and with that little bit of luxury which we can't afford during the rest of the year. That's not the case in Long Kesh where, whether you are an ordinary prisoner or a political prisoner, it can be the most depressing time of the year. It's then that the prisoner really feels alone and caged up. It's not due to a lack of luxuries but the lack of freedom, friends, family and normal life that the reality of being locked up - imprisoned - hits him in the face. Only somebody who has gone through this really knows what it's like.

In 1968, N.I.C.R.A. marched for justice and we still haven't got it. Indeed, there is less justice than ever and surely that is the reason why there are so many political prisoners. Merlyn Rees, and now Roy Mason, have been happy to abolish political prisoner status but have done nothing whatsoever to change the situation in this country that gives rise to the violence. There are very few people who have not broken the Emergency laws - you only have to leave your car unlocked - which shows just how stupid the laws are.

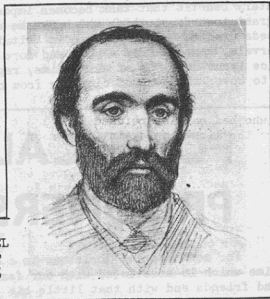
We don't live in a normal society with normal laws and normal courts so the prisoners are not normal criminals and should be recognised as such. Since there are Special Courts there must be Special Category Prisoners.

In the cages of Long Kesh, the Internees taught themselves crafts and educated themselves in the history and problems of our country. They turned Long Kesh into a university and they cameout better men because of this. Every prisoner is entitled to this basic right, to associate freely with his comrades, in order to improve themselves.

The prisoners cannot be blamed for all the evils of this society. They are a part of it as we are and we are responsible if we do nothing to change it.

The Plough greets the Political Prisoners and wishes them Freedom and Justice.

ár scéal féin



MICHAEL
DAVITT
1846-1906

The failure of the Fenian Rising did not mean, as in former efforts, that their ideas disappeared. As was stated in the last issue, their organisation remained more or less intact. This was particularly so for their overseas groups, especially Clann na Gael in America. This body had their own armed wing and one of their more hare-brained schemes was to invade Canada from the U.S. and hold it until the Brits gave up Ireland. In 1867, a small force of armed men crossed into Canada at the Niagra Falls but they were rounded up by the Mounties in a few days having suffered a number of casualties, some of them fatal. This led to a split in the American organisation but the majority remained under the leadership of the I.R.B. (Irish Republican Brotherhood) right up to 1922.

The Fenians certainly did not lack courage, but one of the main lessons of their failure is that courage is not enough - the bravest man in the world cannot tackle a cannon with his bare hands. The other thing it taught is that, while secrecy may protect you from informers for a while, it can also cut you off from the people. The Fenians did not create any sort of mass organisation in support of their ideas so their attack caught the population unawares. The Government was successful in capturing the main leaders with the organising ability and hundreds were sentenced to life in chains or with hard labour. They usually had to suffer the even greater hardship of some puffed-up aristocratic British judge telling them how lucky they were to have the benefit of "British Justice". Many died in a short time from torture and starvation, others were driven mad by the savage conditions.

One man who survived fifteen years of this and came out in one piece, was a Mayo man, MICHAEL DAVITT. He returned to Ireland

having spent the time in prison studying the reasons for the failure of the rising. The conclusions he came to were amazingly similar to those reached by the leadership of the I.R.A. in the early sixties in studying the failure of the Border campaign. They had relied on the dedication, training and sacrifice of small bands of men to tackle the whole British establishment, by attacking its army. But the establishment has other aspects, economic, social, cultural and political through which it rules, and these must also be attacked. This can only be done with the active support of the vast majority of the population, who are the working people. A relatively small body of dedicated people is still needed to lead and organise the people, but cannot and must not act alone.

So Davitt looked at the situation of the Irish people and found that the most important issue affecting the most people, was the Land Question. At this time, 1875, most of the country was still owned by a small number of, mostly English, landlords living like lords' bastards in London and screwing huge rents from the farmers who rented land from them. In most years, millions went hungry and, if there was a bad harvest, starvation faced most of the rural population. The situation was made worse by the fact that most estates had a middleman, who rented from the landlord and rented to the tenants, adding on a percentage for himself. Some estates had five or six grafters standing between the landlord and the man who actually worked the land, and he was the one who had to bear the whole burden.

But there was still huge competition for holdings as a landless man simply starved. Evictions for non-payment of rents were common and an evicted man lost all, including any house he had built on the holdings. It was usual for decent people to refuse to take a holding from which another family had been evicted, but there was often some desperate soul who went against the rules of his class. There existed secret societies to deal with these people and with particularly nasty landlords, agents and police. Tarring and feathering, burning out, whipping with whips, or death are brutal methods but these were brutal times and the fault lay with the greedy owners, or rather robbers, of the land which rightfully belonged to the Irish people.

One of the worst estates was that of Lord Ball, running from Silverbridge in Armagh almost to Castleblaney in Monaghan. This belted earl gave his name to Ballsmill and Hackball's Cross. During the '70s and '80s of the last century, he was losing agents and bailiffs at about the rate of one

PART EIGHT

a year, mostly in the Crossmaglen area. Blunderbusses filled with nails were the usual method of dispatch but a few were stuffed into bog holes carrying a large stone. On the Chambre Estate at Dromintee, a blacksmith called John Berry was evicted and a few days later, a blunderbus was fired into the landlord's coach knocking out his eye but unfortunately leaving the rest of his fat head intact. Berry was arrested and charged and the judge in the case was a one-eyed landlord called Chambre who waffled about being impartial. Within a week, Berry and another man were hanged off Forkhill bridge. Local legend says that Chambre kicked them over himself.

The bad harvest of 1879 brought things to a head and the first place to take action was Ballinrobe in Mayo. Under the leadership of Davitt, the first branch of the Land League was set up on the estate of the famous Captain Boycott. To stop eviction, it was decided that action would be taken against the evictor and anyone who took over the holding. No one would work on the estate, the servants would leave and the crops would rot, no shop would serve them, none would speak to them, if they came to church, the rest would leave. They would be, as was said at the time, "shunned like the leper of old". To give the whole thing a bit of organisation and muscle, Davitt recruited a few old comrades from his Fenian days, even though this met with the disapproval of the I.R.B. leaders. Captain Boycott held out to the end. But as his house began to fall apart and the frost came on still standing corn, as the bill for security guards got bigger, he had to admit defeat. The Land League had won!

TO BE CONTINUED
NEXT ISSUE

TERROR IN CROSS'

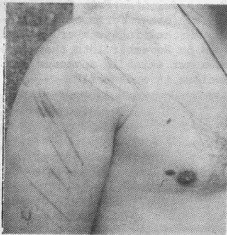
Since the mortar attack on Crossmaglen Barracks, the Marine Commandos stationed there have instigated a no-holds-barred assault on the people of that town. The centre of the town is saturated twenty-four hours a day by British troops with three of four patrols in the Square at the same time. For some weeks, the Square was kept in darkness and motorists were forced to turn off their lights with the result that it was impossible to see from one side to the other. Protests from the local traders forced the Dept. of the Environment (who had earlier refused to comment on the situation) to turn the lights on again for a short time but now most of them have been smashed with milk bottles by the Brits or have been cut off once more.

Under this cover of darkness, the Commandos are persecuting innocent people. To be stopped and searched three times within 100 yards is usual, verbal abuse and insulting language is normal but many instances are more serious than this. The photograph below shows one person who has suffered from the Commando's rifles and knives and he is not alone. Plenty of other people from Crossmaglen have gone to the Republican Club's Advice Centre to tell how they have been assaulted, man-handled and beaten by the Commandos within these past few weeks. They include a fourteen year old boy who was dragged along by the hair and beaten about the face with fists and a torch.

Other more bizarre incidents have taken place with the Commandos in the town. Dead rats have been thrown into cars at road-blocks, they have planted parcels which they then claim to be bombs and cause large areas to be evacuated. Whole patrols have been seen in civilian clothes carrying shotguns and pretending to be members of the S.A.S. There are also genuine S.A.S. operating in the town. One in particular has been in the area for over six months and has also been seen around Newry in civilian clothes. He is a frequent visitor to the bars in Crossmaglen carrying a semi-automatic shotgun, sometimes with a torch tied to it.

The British propaganda machine has gone to a lot of trouble over these past few years to build up an image of Crossmaglen as a wild, uncivilised place in the heart of so-called "bandit country" where everybody is a gunman and they now believe that they can do whatever they want there without any out-cry from the politicians or the press. They are right because there has been no out-cry despite the most insistent brutality carried out by the British in Ireland for many a long year. Some local councillors, including Seamus Murphy of the Republican Clubs, have spoken out as have the local Civil Rights Association but without getting a great reception from the press which is quite happy to foster the image of "bandit country". It is vitally important to defeat this British propaganda by exposing every criminal British act. Report every case of harassment to the Republican Clubs Advice Centre and make a formal complaint to the R.U.C. Not that you can expect help from the R.U.C. but you must do this to make a claim and force the situation into public view.

THE RESULTS OF
BRITISH TERRORISM



A BETTER INDUSTRIAL FRONT

LIFE FOR ALL

The Better Life For All Campaign organised by the Northern Ireland Committee of I.C.T.U. took a further welcome step in Newry on Thurs. 18th November with a rally against unemployment and public spending cuts. Newry Trades Union Council is to be congratulated for the success of its rally at the Town Hall which gave the opportunity for workers, those facing unemployment and the unemployed to voice their protest.

That hundreds of workers downed tools and marched to the Town Hall where they were joined by students and unemployed workers is an encouraging indication that the apathy which had apparently engulfed this community is now broken. Unemployment is nothing new to the Newry area. The only change over the years has been the growing numbers now standing at over 4,000. With such a history unemployment has created the ills of apathy and unemployability. That there are a number amongst the 4,000 unemployed who today are unable to work is a condemnation, not of themselves, but of the fact that they have been denied the opportunity of meaningful employment for many years. That many of the 4,000 have lost all hope of ever gaining worthwhile jobs is a direct result of years of the dehumanising process of seeking work without success.

With the announcement that eight leading Trade Unionists representing 6 Countries throughout Europe were coming to see Newry, its people and its problems for themselves a spark of hope was lit to which hundreds responded. From four assembly points around the town and carrying banners proclaiming the 6 Demands of the Better Life for All Campaign people marched to the Town Hall to attend the Rally, listen to the European Trade Union Confederation Delegates and Voice their own protest.

The turn out was smaller than the number who marched for Peace through Newry on the 18th September but those who left their work on the 18th November and those who joined them were not just marching for Peace. They were marching for Peace To work and Live a Meaningful Life Free from Unemployment and all the other forms of Violence. To those who marched in September but failed to join them on November 18th they were saying, "Peace does not exist in a vacuum and Peace is useless in a desert!"

The most encouraging features of the Rally besides the large turnout, were the broad representation of people present who are affected by unemployment and the positive contributions made by many of them during the open discussion. Amongst the E.T.U.C. Delegation present were Anton Barberot, France, Erik Neilsen, Norway, Juris Blattel, Kurt Hasemeyer and Rosemary Heineker of West Germany, Jack Maggogun of the British T.U.C. and Peter Coldrick from the E.T.U.C. Secretariat, Brussels.

The solidarity shown by the E.T.U.C. and the work of the Trade Union Movement in the Better Life For All Campaign is in sharp contrast to those of the Business Class at home who attack the unemployed and the benefits paid to them and demand a cut back in Public Spending. They dare to say that the unemployed do not want work. We challenge them on this allegation --- PROVIDE MEANINGFUL AND WELL PAID WORK FOR THE NEWRY AREA'S 4,000 UNEMPLOYED AND THEN DARE TO DECLARE HOW MANY DO NOT WANT WORK!

That the British Army sees the Better Life for All Campaign as a direct threat to the Establishment Interests it is here to protect was evident on Thursday 18th November. As an unemployed man was leaving the Town Hall after the Rally he was stopped by British Army Terrorists who had surrounded the doorway. He was arrested immediately and taken to the Bessbrook British Army Barracks. So enraged were Trade Unionists, at a person being arrested because he attended this Rally - someone who had worked with the Trades Council in distributing Notices of the Rally to his fellow unemployed - that they made an immediate protest to the British Army and R.U.C. After about one hour the man was released. Another indication of the Establishments fear of the Better Life For All Campaign was witnessed at the major Rally in Belfast on Saturday 20th November when Special Branchmen were present to photograph Trade Unionists and their families participating.

The Rally in Newry on 18th November marked a further milestone in the fight against Unemployment. We trust it will be only one of many more necessary until the evil of Unemployment is removed.



PRODAN, PAY OFFS ?

INDUSTRIAL FRONT

ULCON

Some months ago, Ulcon, the Container building firm, paid off over thirty workers supposedly due to a shortage of orders. The firm is now back to full strength. It is usual Trade Union practice that the people who were paid off should get the first option of coming back before anybody new is started. But this has not happened in Ulcon. The firm has refused to re-employ some of the workers because they were too active in the Trade Union and they have branded them as trouble-makers.

One of the management, Tommy Hillen, has stated that the reason he will not give one man back his job is that he is a member of the Republican Clubs. He has also said that if he had his way, he would not employ any Newry people at all. This is in line with the fact that this Dundalk firm originally wanted to go to Craigavon but were persuaded by the Government - and the grants - to come to Newry. It just goes to show how the high unemployment here suits firms like this, so they can pick and choose who they exploit.

It now appears that yet another factory in the area may close and could throw seventy more men onto the dole. The firm is PRODAN (T&C) Ltd. which, until a year ago, traded under the name of Tools and Cans. Tools and Cans was set up in September 1973 as part of the German Horning Group with one nominal Irish Director. They managed to run up an overdraft of £300,000 before going into liquidation. The bank took control of all the assets and looked for a buyer. Prodan stepped in and took over. They are also a German firm but it is not clear if they are connected with the original Horning Group. Of course, they quickly got a further hand-out of public money.

The first indication the Prodan workers had of the present state of affairs was when their pay-cheques bounced. This is the usual subtle way that the bosses have of telling local workers that they are due for the chop. A Receiver was appointed by the Ulster Bank; he is a Mr. Carson who also acted as that bank's undertaker to bury Yardmaster. One of the first things he did along with the owners, was to sack the Managing Director, Herr Bonhe. Since his dismissal, some very interesting facts have come to light. For example, expenses paid business trips, a company car and house and frequent trips to Germany with his girl friend, paid for by the company of course.

At a recent meeting between the workers and Government representatives, questions such as these were raised by the workers but the Government people refused to answer them. They had no comment to make on a two week business trip made by Herr Bonhe and Mr. Pat McGuigan (Production Superintendent) to Brazil. This trip cost thousands of pounds and brought in £30 (yes, thirty) worth of orders, but they say they had a great time (so did Ronald Biggs). There was no comment either on the unpaid bills, such as, £1,000 for electricity, £900 to the Post Office or the bills to various steel and tool manufacturers who have stopped all credit.

In fact, the money situation is so severe that cheques have to be signed by the Receiver and can only be cashed at the Ulster Bank Branch in Warrenpoint. Even when small items such as soap have to be got the van-driver has to draw money from petty cash to get them as none of the local traders will give any more credit.

The Receiver insists that the factory is not going to close yet the workers have been asked to clear off all the close on the books with a promise of a £25 bonus which sounds like a very poor pay off. Prodan and Tools and Cans has been in existence for just three years and during that time has received nearly a quarter of a million pounds of public money, which the workers didn't see too much of. The bank will not lose out as it can sell off the stock and machinery, as usual, the only losers are the workers and the public whose money was spent. The workers have demanded that Don Concannon, Minister of State for Industry, come to meet them and explain where the public money went to. So far there has been no response to this demand. The workers and local Trade Unionists should also demand that the factory remain open under state control and that the German owners be made to pay back the vast sums of money they have squandered.



"It's a funny world, where toilet rolls increase in value and the poor decrease."

what's the crack

COMMANDOS CRACK UP IN CROSS'

SHORT MEMORY SPAN

I see that me old mate, Sean Hollywood, has sprung into the lime-light again. He was very quiet for a long time in the Council and I thought he had gone into hibernation but it was only a fit of the huffs over the General Election and because everybody is out of step except himself. But now that there is a chance of another General Election, Sean is making plenty of noise. Mind you, he's saying some quare things about these parish-militaries and Armalite nuns. That's a turn up for the books because I remember back in '72 when Sean was only too glad of "the boys". After getting a death threat from the Loyalists, he went to a certain local organisation to ask for protection. A number of these people stayed in his house for over a week to watch over the poor fellow and tuck him up in bed at night. But Sean likes to forget about these sticky situations since they don't suit his new image as a fearless friend of the "Security Forces". It's not that Sean has completely changed his views, he's just trying to woo the Unionist voters of South Down away from Fnoch Powell. You can fool some of the people some of the time.

I thought I would go for a ride on my bike the other day looking for news and found myself in the Square in Crossmaglen. There was only a handful of people about but there was nearly sixty Brits in groups of six walking round and round the Square. One of the squaddies seemed to have cracked completely. He was pulling a dead rat round on a bit of string and stopping occasionally with tears in his eyes to talk to it. It's true, I swear it. I even heard him saying, "Don't worry, Rover, only another few weeks and we can get out of here". Every time a civilian appeared, the Brits pounced on him shouting, "We've got a terrorist, Sarge". I wondered why every Brit in Crossmaglen was in the Square at the same time and why they didn't bother me, then somebody told me that they haven't slept in the barracks since the last mortar attack and that they are scared stiff of bikes for some reason.

WE WHO CONDEMN

I love reading those letters in the Reporter and trying to guess who's writing what. Of course, we all know that regular correspondent, "We Who Condemn", the ardent defender of the Provies. This ex-Republican from the Corrigs should use the title, "I'll write but not fight" since nobody has been able to tell me of anything he has ever done for Ireland - except talk. He has been known to claim that he was almost on the job that Sean South was killed in but he had something more important to do. He must have been writing a letter to the papers.

BINGO BOMB BEATS BLUSHING BRICKIE

There was an embarrassing time for the Brickie when the Provies put a bomb outside the Town Hall during his Bingo session. At first he tried to blame it on the Stickers and then he blamed the Loyalists but the Provies blew the gaff when they admitted it in the papers. It was a case of a very red brick that day.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

I told you in the last issue about P.W.S. making road-block signs for the Brits and R.U.C. Well, it seems that one worker at least was not happy about this situation. He refused to deliver a load of these signs to the Brits in Derry and was sacked on the spot. It's sad that things are so bad in McCartan and McAtter's that his mates were afraid to back him up.

SHOW ME THE ROAD TO GO HOME

I hear there's a charge now for going through the Brit checkpoint on the Omearh Road. Lorry drivers who pass through carrying anything worthwhile, find a few things missing after they are searched, spirits are very popular. If any of us did this it would be called stealing but when the Brits do it, it is called Law and Order. It's a funny world.

MONEY TROUBLE AT MARINECRAFT

Rumours have reached me concerning the unhappy state of affairs in Marinecraft Ltd. the fibre glass boat firm in Warrenpoint which is owned by Billy Turkinton. It is being said that the pubs have been warned not to cash the workers cheques due to their rubbery quality but at least one person has already been caught. It all brings back memories of Seenoip and the more recent Lewis Styles and is enough to make a simple minded soul like myself wonder where all the profits go.

Mind you, Omearh is a funny place all round these days. The other night, I was on my way back from Dundalk and was coming by the Long Woman's Grave when I was stopped at a road-block. The road-block was manned by five masked men who said they were the I.R.A. which was a bit strange as they said it with nice English accents. They were armed with semi-automatic shot guns and other odd little yokes which a usually reliable source tells me were Ingram M 10 Machine Pistols. I soon realised that this was the infamous S.A.S., (Strong And Stupid) suffering from another map reading error so I politely gave them directions how to get to Angola and left quickly.

A careful reading of Provie statements in the papers these days, shows some strange things. My money is on a split after Christmas. Any takers?