

SOUTHILL NEWS

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S.T.A.R. SUCCESS



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COVER STORY: S.T.A.R. SUCCESS

FOLLOWING THE public meeting on wandering horses which was organised by S.T.A.R. (the Southill Tenants' and Residents' Association) and attended by TDs, Councillors, and more than five hundred other citizens representing many thousands more, moves are to be made by Deputies O'Malley and Coughlan to introduce a Private Members' Bill in the Dail over the next few weeks.

These public promises were made following concerted action by S.T.A.R. over the years, and particularly over the past six months, to rid the area of wandering horses. The meeting was lively at times as we listened to complaints and suggested remedies being offered by delegates representing seventy-four different organisations.

Replying to a query from John Gilligan, Superintendent Spillane of the Garda Siochana stated that fifteen horses had been rounded up in the last week, three owners had been before the courts, and more prosecutions were pending.

Mr. Flan O'Neill, housing officer, in reply to Clem Mason, stated that the land for the "secret pound" was located in Tipperary, but when the Corporation's intentions became known the land would not be sold and the Corporation had to abandon their plan.

Mr. Dan Miller, Vice President, Limerick Council of Trade Unions, pledged support for the meeting and said that the fact that a child had been injured was cause enough to make the Minister for Justice enforce greater penalties on horse owners.

Councillor Leddin said that while a £20,000 Corporation pound was being built in Rathbane, it would be in vain unless provisions

were made for a caretaker's house, a full-time staff and adequate security arrangements.

Councillor Jim Kemmy said that Limerick was the worst place in Ireland for wandering horses. The fact that the problem could not be solved was a measure of the backwardness of our society. He went on to say that ten years ago the Council had also discussed the matter. He suggested that the full-time keeper should be armed with a telephone but at times a revolver might be more appropriate.

As we go to press, Southill and Limerick are still plagued with wandering horses and all the attendant dangers. The "Southill News" will keep its readers up to date on any new developments, and in particular the Private Members' Bill being introduced by Messrs O'Malley and Coughlan.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

As a reader of your paper and a member of the Association, I have followed with interest your activities with regard to wandering horses, and I also attended your public meeting. With due respect to the dedication of S.T.A.R. in pursuing this problem, I always felt that the only solution could be a political one and I'm sure that you will agree that the resolution which came from the meeting proves me right.

However, the point I would like to make is this. During Deputy O'Malley's term as Minister for Justice we still had the problem of wandering horses, and what did he do about it? For that matter, did the Deputy ever introduce any progressive legislation? Is not the

nation still plagued with injustices?

Deputy Coughlan, of course, is another matter. Coughlan has always boasted about his 25 years on the City Council and his 15 years in Dail Eireann. On my reckoning, Coughlan's combined salaries and expenses has amounted to more than £67,000. Now, in the name of God, will you tell me what has this man done to justify being paid this enormous amount of money? Still in this city we have horses shitting against our front doors. Why did he not do something five or ten or even twenty years ago?

Of course, there he was, as could be expected, playing to the gallery. Please tell Steve that as far as I'm concerned he is played out

"Ex-Worker".

O'Malley Park.

FAMILY PLANNING CLINIC

WE CAN confirm now that within the next month a family planning service will be available in Limerick City.

The Chairman and Secretary of S.T.A.R. have been consistent advocates of this and have assisted in every way possible in bringing about this service. Now that all the hysteria has died down we will take a look back on its short history as recorded in the "Limerick Socialist" of September 1975. The article stated:

CONTRACEPTION IN LIMERICK

The contraception controversy has had a short history in Limerick. Hysterical headlines, angry allegations, and charges of gutter journalism, have all played a part in

the issue.

Ironically enough, the story begins quietly, by the banks of the Shannon at Plassey. The scene is the campus of the National Institute for Higher Education, and the time is December 1974.

A curious reporter discovers that the College has its own Family Planning Advice Centre. It caters for the 800 students on the campus and gives them advice and information on family planning facilities available in Ireland.

It is pointed out that information leaflets are not forced into the hands of any student. The Service is there for the students and it is up to them to avail of it.

The students themselves are careful to comment on the Centre and the newspaper report ends by saying that it is maybe a sign of Limerick's conservatism that the family planning action had to come from a group of young people.

Before this the only public mention of family planning had come from Socialist Jim Kemmy, who listed it as a basic civil and human right during his campaign for a seat on the Limerick City Council. The fact that he was elected with a massive vote lends weight to the theory that people privately agreed with his public views on the once taboo subject of contraception.

However, as if to counteract the growing trend favouring the legislation of contraception, the Catholic clergy of Limerick through its Diocesan Office, began to insert some interesting paragraphs in the local newspaper. These asked about marriage problems, and believe it or not, family planning. The planning they had in mind, however, was the so called "natural" methods. A few months later, Fr. James Good, writing in "Hibernia", tore apart

the subtle distinction. The fact that he lived in Limerick added extra sting to the blow.

The controversy died down somewhat until June 1975 when the Southill Tenants' Association passed a resolution urging the setting up of a family planning clinic in the housing area catering for over 1,000 homes.

A news team from the "Sunday World" came down and in an article described the area as "Pillhill". This seemed to arouse all kinds of vengeance-seeking emotions in the local Community Council. Some Press statements and articles saw Council spreading its wings, with its public relations officers issuing statements from all the bodies and associations affiliated to it denouncing the "Sunday World" and "artificial" contraception.

This cut no ice with the "Sunday World". The paper saw through the Council's act and accordingly dismissed the many, "angry", outraged and "shocked" complaints saying that they bordered on the hysterical.

"There appears to be a highly organised campaign by anti-contraception advocates to prevent a family planning clinic being set up in the area", commented the newspaper, correctly assessing the mood of the Community Council, which because it has influential clerical and religious members, could predictably enough be expected to react in the way most pleasing to the clergy.

Shortly afterwards, on the first anniversary of his election to the City Council, Jim Kemmy called a public meeting to discuss the idea of establishing a family planning clinic for Limerick.

The meeting was well supported and the names of people willing to

help were listed for future reference. Three speakers from the Irish Family Planning Association attended and outlined their policies and difficulties to the meeting.

Some opposition might have been expected at the meeting but this did not materialise. The city of Limerick laid easy in its bed, and the "outraged", "disgusted", and "shocked" posturings of the Southill Community Council were quietly forgotten, and its allegations of "gutter journalists" rang hollow over the city of Church spires.

Last month came the latest episode in the family planning controversy in Limerick. The Catholic Bishop, Dr. Newman, who has spent many of his years behind the walls of Maynooth, came out against the establishment of a family planning clinic in Limerick. Wisely, he said that if one were established there was nothing he could do, except tell the Catholic people to stay away. There it is -- the simple solution.

Yes, it is all too easy when you live in a palace, and don't have to support a wife and a number of young kids on the Dole. What about those people who want and need a safe, reliable, family planning method? Let's hope that before long it will be available to them in Limerick.

SITUATIONS VACANT

MALE NURSE (HORSES)

A VACANCY has occurred for the above position in the Southill--Kennedy Park area. Applicants should ideally have the following qualifications:

- (A) A degree in Veterinary Surgery
- (B) A recognised diploma in any of

- the social sciences;
- (C) A love of horses;
 - (D) A sound knowledge of the area;
 - (E) A capacity to run the three-minute mile;
 - (F) A good physique and an aptitude for fisticuffs.

The successful candidate must be willing at all times to put the welfare of the horses before all else. This will sometimes involve opening garden gates to allow access to the grass therein, thereby reducing any risk to the horses who might otherwise have to wander on the busy roads.

The candidate should also possess an elementary knowledge of the laws dealing with wandering horses and should be ready at all times to assist the Gardai in preserving the horses' right to enjoy the benefits of this green-belt area.

This appointment will remain in force (subject to the will of Parliament) until the year 2000.

Salary and other fringe benefits will be by way of an annual collection from the City Councillors.

RENT STRIKE

THERE HAS been anxiety and a certain amount of confusion among the tenants of this Estate in recent weeks as a result of the latest huge rent increases which the tenants feel are quite unjustified.

Numerous approaches have been made to the Southill Tenants' and Residents' Association demanding a rent strike immediately.

The Association would ask all tenants to try and be patient until the outcome of discussions between the Department of Local Government and our National Executive, which will be taking place in the coming

weeks, becomes known.

We appreciate that this latest increase is an intolerable burden on the already overtaxed community. However, having asked the tenants to be patient, if a rent strike should become necessary in the long term, we can guarantee that it will be the best organised strike in the history of N.A.T.O.

MORE RECOGNITION FOR S.T.A.R.

AT THE Annual General Meeting of the Munster Regional Council of N.A.T.O. (National Association of Tenants' Organisations) held in Cork recently, our Secretary and joint editor of the "Southill News" Mr. Jack Cantillon, was unanimously elected as Delegate to the National Executive of N.A.T.O.

Jack, who has played an active role in the Association since he moved to Southill, has stated that his main priorities at National level will be the 1924 Small Dwellings Act, the 1966 Rent Act, the present scale on which rents are assessed, and the question of more facilities for children.

At the same meeting, our treasurer, and one of our most active members, John Gilligan, was elected Vice Chairman of the Munster Regional Council. John has achieved this position through his hard work and persistence on behalf of tenants.

On our own Southill committee, Vincent Finnan has been elected Assistant Secretary and Clement Mason Vice Treasurer.

Our Committee now is as follows: Noel Hayes; Christy Dillon; Mrs. L. Kidney; John Kiely; Ernest Fitzgerald; Jack Cantillon.

Any tenant who feels that he or she has a problem that might be of

concern to the Association should not hesitate to get in touch with any of the above named committee members.

COMMUNITY GOVERNMENT MOVEMENT

MOVES ARE well under way to form a new political party. The party is to be called the Community Government Movement.

The movement itself is to be made up by an amalgamation of Community Councils throughout the country. The set-up will be similar to that of most existing political parties, with local and national committees or branches.

At present there are seven Community Councillors in Dublin and the very serious point that we must now make to all tenants is this: On the Dublin Council an unsuccessful move was made by a Community Councillor to push a resolution calling on the Dublin Corporation to deduct rent arrears from the tenant's Social Welfare payments or from his wage packet.

This resolution, we are more than happy to report, was blocked.

If this resolution had been passed, it would have been a gross invasion of the civil and human rights of tenants and workers.

We would like it to be known that if any attempt is made here in Limerick to introduce such an iniquitous practise, S.T.A.R. will oppose it with all the means at its disposal.

Another point of interest is that in the Dublin set-up, besides tenants and residents, they also have landlords in their movement.

We have been warned!

THE "Southill News" -- OR BUST!

A BRUISED but grateful reader called to see the editors of the "Southill News" recently to express his appreciation for our paper.

"As there are no fewer than five adults living in our house, I'm sure you can imagine the chaos every month when the "Southill News" drops through the letterbox", he told us. "In the rush down stairs last Sunday, I collided with my eldest son and I wound up with two bruised ribs. So in future could you drop in at least three copies before the house is wrecked or someone is seriously injured."

He took out his wallet (not so bulky in these hard times). "Here's two pounds to cover the cost, and please don't publish my name and address as I am a member of the Labour Party and you know how Coughlan and Lipper feel about you. Carry on the good work."

COLD COMFORT AND A COLOURED VIEW

A REPORT in a local paper stated that the Parish Priest had been presented with a colour TV set in appreciation of his good work -- and fair play to the man. And good viewing. And long may he prosper.

But then, tucked away at the bottom of the sports page in the same paper, there was a tiny little item of a few lines with the heading: "FUEL SCHEME". And we quote: "Limerick Corporation has received a State grant of £53,000 to operate its fuel scheme for this year."

This statement was printed without comment, and no doubt without consideration for those unfortunate people who totally rely on this "Cheap Fuel Scheme" for their winter heating. And not necessarily

only the old folk, but also the young. The workers who have been subjected to prolonged unemployment by the collapse of a system which was not of their making in the first place.

We wonder if the Corporation, or the "Department", who bestow these fuel grants have considered the following facts.

(1) That the price of fuel has increased by twenty per cent in the past twelve months, which means that the "grant", which is the same amount as last year, will buy twenty per cent less fuel this year.

(2) That because of prolonged unemployment, the number of families who qualify for "cheap fuel" has doubled.

On this reckoning we believe that before Christmas the "cheap fuel" will have been burned up.

Surely the Corporation should consider these points now and not wait until further unnecessary suffering is caused.

But of course these problems must seem remote to the people concerned. The Corporation officials and local politicians will hardly be relying on "cheap fuel" to keep them warm as they tuck into their turkey and plum pudding and wash it down with liberal quantities of best brandy.

Once again, Limerick seems to stand out as the most unprogressive city in the Republic. Colour TVs and cheap turf make strange bedfellows. If some people had their way we would no doubt still be living in dark little hovels in the back lanes of the "Irish Town".

S.T.A.R. MEMBERSHIP: SUBSCRIPTIONS

MEMBERS OF the Committee of the Southill Tenants' and Residents'

Association are at the moment going from house to house on the Estate to invite subscriptions to the Association. The annual subscription, which is only 35p, covers membership of the Association for a whole year. It also guarantees monthly delivery, free of charge, of the "Southill News", probably the most informative and outspoken tenants' newspaper in the country.

This newspaper is the watchdog and guardian of the tenants' rights and it is of the utmost importance to all of us that it should continue to prosper. The costs of production are constantly increasing and we have consequently been forced, albeit reluctantly, to put up our nominal charge from 3p to 5p for non-members of the Association. (There is a great demand for the "Southill News" throughout the entire region.)

The annual subscription of 35p also guarantees the tenant membership of the national body, the National Association of Tenants' Organisations, which entitles him or her to all the services and facilities (as well as the protection) of that influential body.

Included with every copy of this month's "Southill News" is a special pamphlet published by N.A.T.O. It deals with the subject of "Buying Irish" and we have no hesitation in commending it to all our readers.

SAY IT IN THE "Southill News"

ALL CONTRIBUTIONS and letters, etc., from our readers for inclusion in the "Southill News" should be submitted to either of the joint editors, or to any member of the S.T.A.R. Committee.

All contributions are welcome.