



GYPSY HARASSMENT IN LIVERPOOL

Kevin McGrath writes: A man who sat in front of a lorry to stop it towing away caravans during a gypsy eviction last week had his leg trapped under a wheel, and suffered a chipped bone. It happened last Friday in Liverpool, the latest incident in a series of police and council acts of harassment.

For the last 18 months the groups of gypsies in question have been in Liverpool. Strictly speaking it might be more accurate to call them tinkers, since they are of Irish origin, though they've been in England for a generation. Most of the men work as tarmacers, one is a scrap merchant. Twelve weeks ago the group were ordered off a site where they had been living for some time, and where the Simon Community had proposed they should be allowed to stay.

The council turned down the plan, although they will be legally obliged to provide some sort of site by September, under the Caravans Act of 1968. Unless they can manage to work some kind of fiddle involving getting rid of the gypsies first.

So the group moved to Breezhill Roundabout, where police and council moved in and blocked all the entrances, with a round-the-clock police guard, so that they could not move elsewhere. For three days the

police arrested one man per day. Eventually one Saturday morning the group managed to slip out, and moved to Smith Street.

It was at Smith Street that the next eviction took place on Wednesday, July 15. It involved 12 caravans, occupied by some 40 people. Five arrests were made, including Dave Craig of Open Projects, a communitarian set-up that has just started a magazine called *Openings*, and is doing various good things round Liverpool. The reason Dave was arrested appears to have been because he was taking photographs. Once in the police station his film was exposed, and most of the shots ruined.

The gypsies moved on to another site on waste ground; no facilities, nothing. Another eviction order served promptly, and in came the council with their police helpers. It was in the course of this eviction that Mike Chandler sat in front of the lorry which didn't stop.

The reason it didn't stop was that the driver couldn't see him—the driver relied on the guidance of a police

continued on page 4