

## Lab. man sues for cyanide panic

Panic-stricken laboratory technician John Eastwood thought the end had come because he believed he had inhaled potentially lethal cyanide fumes, a court heard.

The teenager made a dash for the antidote, but in his panic smashed the beaker he needed to use to mix two life-saving chemicals.

In desperation he reached for an alternative remedy — a capsule of chemical which had to be inhaled — but discovered the first one he went for was missing.

But 19-year-old Mr. Eastwood found a second capsule and inhaled its contents.

He was later taken to hospital and kept in overnight, but had suffered such emotional trauma he eventually had to give up work as a laboratory technician at the High Court at Birmingham was told.

### Severe

Mr. Eastwood, now aged 24, is suing his former employer, the Ever Ready Co. Ltd., of Wolverhampton, for damages for the severe anxiety he suffered as a result of the incident in August 1978.

On the day of the accident he was cleaning up soiled pans in the plating shop and said he was told to dip them in one solution and then submerge them in the cyanide vat.

Mr. Brent said that the company, which denies liability, claims Mr. Eastwood was not instructed to dip the pans in the first solution, as this operation had already been carried out. His only task was to submerge them in the cyanide.

(Proceeding)

## NEIGHBOURS TO RESCUE AS HOAX CALL DELAYS FIREMEN

# Blaze hero snatches young boy to safety

Neighbours armed with buckets of water teamed up to fight a Birmingham house blaze as firemen were delayed elsewhere by a hoax call.

A three-year-old boy was rescued from a bedroom as smoke threatened to engulf the house, and firemen were quick to praise the alert neighbours.

"There is no doubt about it; if it had not been for them, the situation would have been a hell of a lot more serious," said Station Officer John Ward.

"They were magic." Mrs. Anita Richards had plucked four of her children to safety after flames spread in her kitchen at Cherhill Covert, Druids Heath.

But young Gregory was still in his bedroom.

### Ladder

A neighbour climbed a ladder and got through a back-bedroom window after choking black smoke blocked an attempt to enter through the front door.

Mr. Michael Varney then brought the youngster to safety.

The family, including Karen, aged 11, Barbara, eight, Paul, five and Leon, 14 months old, were taken to Selly Oak Hospital and detained for treatment.

When firemen arrived, the blaze was out, the rescue was over, and the neighbours had begun clearing up the mess.

### Evening Mail Reporter

The fire is thought to have been caused by children playing with matches.

Firemen pumped water onto the fuel tank of a wrecked car to prevent it becoming a "firebomb" as they worked to rescue the trapped 21-year-old driver, following a crash in a Worcester-shire town.

The crash in Icknield Street Drive, Redditch, left the mangled car in a V-shape, with the front battered almost to a point.

Car owner Mr. Glen Perrygrove, of Badger Close, Winyates, Redditch, was cut free from the wrecked Ford Fiesta by firemen.

The car was travelling along Icknield Street Drive towards Washford when it hit the roadside kerb. It veered across the road, struck an 18in kerb and turned over several times before crashing into railings above an underpass.

A police spokesman said today: "If it had gone through the railings and dropped into

the underpass it could have exploded because the fuel tank fractured. It could have been a firebomb."

Firemen trained hoses on the fuel tank as they cut Mr. Perrygrove from the wreckage.

He was taken to Birmingham Accident Hospital with head and chest injuries and his condition today was said to be comfortable.



HERO... Mr. Michael Varney, who battled to rescue young Gregory Richards from the blaze-hit home.



SAFE... Mrs. Anita Richards with children Karen, Barbara and Paul. Her other children, Gregory and Leon, were detained in hospital.

## Dossier thief pays penalty

A man who stole a dossier on the world's top soccer stars from England football manager Bobby Robson, today paid the penalty.

Soccer mad Keith Barron was ordered to carry out 160 hours unpaid community work in his spare time as well as paying £335 compensation to the England manager.

Solihull magistrates heard that Barron broke into Mr. Robson's car parked outside the Albany Hotel in Birmingham while he was on a trip abroad.

### Ditched

After stealing a briefcase, he ditched it in a canal at King's Heath, not knowing it contained a detailed dossier on Britain's top players and international stars.

Barron, aged 32, a photographer's assistant, of Cromwell Lane, Northfield, admitted as a previous hearing stealing property worth £435 from Mr. Robson who lives in Ipswich, last month. He also admitted going equipped for theft at Birmingham Airport two days later.

After reading reports, magistrates ordered Barron to pay £69 costs. They also ordered the confiscation of five petrol cans, a length of rubber tubing and his Triumph 2000 car which he used when he went to steal petrol at the airport.

The footballers' dossier was returned intact to Mr. Robson when his briefcase was found in the canal.

## Bank cash snatch

A snatch thief escaped with only a few pounds in a raid at a Birmingham bank.

The cash and some cheques were grabbed from an employee of a local firm who was about to pay over the money yesterday afternoon.

The raider then fled from the branch of Barclays in Kingsbury Road, Erdington, and made a high speed getaway in a black VW car, driven by a second man.

The thief was aged 21, 5ft 7in, with short dark hair and wearing a dark top and trousers. His accomplice was aged about 40.

## Electric strike threat

Electricians look set to issue a strike deadline after a breakdown in pay-talks with Birmingham City Council.

About 30 electricians claim the city council wants to slash their pay by £25 a week by axing travel allowances.

Talks so far have failed to produce a result and the electricians meet tomorrow to decide whether to issue seven days' notice of strike.

## Buses break miners' strike picket line

County Labour leaders today acted to prevent West Midlands buses being used to break miners' picket lines at a Warwickshire colliery.

The Passenger Transport Executive has had a contract to run two double-deckers to and from Keresley Colliery three times a day for the past 34 years.

But West Midlands Transport chairman Councillor Phil Bateman said today that the shuttle service was now being used to break the striking miners' picket lines.

"Apparently, the police have been loading about 100 scab miners on to the double-deckers and using them as paramilitary personnel carriers to drive into the colliery," he said.

Complaints about the use of the West Midlands buses were made by Coventry county councillor David Spencer, who was on

the Keresley picket line when the double-deckers drove through it in convoy yesterday morning.

Coun. Bateman said: "I take a dim view of this indeed and I have made my feelings clearly known to PTE directors today."

"I have not ordered them to stop using the buses to cross the picket lines. But I certainly do not expect this to happen again."

The PTE's contract with Keresley and three small West Staffordshire collieries is worth about £70,000 a year. Coun. Bateman is to see West Midlands Regional Transport and General Workers' Union chief Mr. Brian Mathers to find out why the Coventry bus drivers were prepared to cross the picket lines.

### OUR KID



"You should be releasing all that aggro at Greenham Common, not on me."

## 'North Sea oil will last many years'

Britain can remain self-sufficient in oil through to the end of the century and perhaps even beyond, as long as the momentum of exploration and development is sustained, according to the chairman of Shell UK.

"North Sea oil is not about to run out — or at least not in the same sort of timescale many people are talking about," Mr. John Reisman told the Energy Industries' Club in London today.

## BL to reveal big cut in losses

by CARSON BLACK

BL is expected to reveal tomorrow that it has slashed its multi-million pound losses. The fortunes of the state-owned car company continued to improve during 1983 compared with the previous year when trading losses were £125m.

The company set a target to break even at the trading level during 1983, and was well on course by the half year with £1.3m profits. Improvement was maintained in the second half and the company may even return a small gross profit, according to informed observers.

However, the group is expected to record a heavy loss when tax, interest from loans and extraordinary items are taken into consideration.

### Performance

Tomorrow, for the first time the performance of each BL subsidiary will be revealed in the annual report. This will show that

Jaguar is still the jewel in the BL crown with unexpectedly high profits of about £40m. It is believed that the volume car maker, Austin Rover, is trading in the black with profits of about £4m.

The Unipart component company has increased its 1982 profits of £13m to around £18m. Only the Land Rover Group and the truck

and bus group, Leyland Vehicles, are understood to have traded unprofitably.

Land Rover Group is expected to record a loss of about £10m. Included in that figure is the van maker, Freight Rover, but this is thought to be trading profitably for the first time.

The Leyland Vehicles Group is again the big drain on BL's resources with losses in excess of £60m before tax.

The small hi-tech, Istel, formerly BL Systems, mainly linked with Austin Rover, is also in profit.

## Joyful reunion after raid

Delighted John Griffiths was reunited with his 14-year-old pet dog yesterday after she was set loose in Birmingham city centre by thieves.

Raiders kicked out the Lakeland terrier when they smashed their way into Mr Griffiths's car parked in Kent Road, Ladywood.

But hours later, the dog, named Bianca, was found wandering along Sherlock

Street. "A group of lads spotted her and carried her into Digbeth police station," said 32-year-old Mr Griffiths. "She was apparently trembling with fear and could easily have been killed on the busy streets."

The thieves struck while Mr Griffiths, of Chinbrook Road, Yardley Wood, was seeing a show at the Birmingham Hippodrome.

"I got back to find the back window of my car smashed and the stereo and speakers stolen," he explained.

"I had Bianca in the car because I had planned to take her over to my parents' after the theatre."

"When I discovered she was not there I was horrified. But her, she is back home and safe and well."