



# Letters



## Bus users & workers unite

Dear LOP,

Carmen Rose Curran's angry letter (LOP 134) regarding a dispute between herself and a bus driver does suggest she was poorly treated — whatever the legalities (if any) involved. But as a bus worker myself I'd like to comment a bit on some of the general implications present in her letter.

A driver I was working with one day said: "We're here to provide a public service, not a public convenience," and now and again passengers do behave in the negative spirit he would have had in mind. Some wave down a bus in between stops during peak hours and show annoyance when the driver doesn't cut across a line of traffic to stop for them; some others don't show appreciation when they are picked up between stops (some drivers consequently have given up doing this); and antics take place on some late-night runs that I just want to close my eyes to! Passengers can be provocative, or seem to be, as well as someone who's working on a bus can.

So, as a general rule, I wouldn't say that "the customer is always right," because events tending to inform an embittered and barracks-style outlook can and do happen; and one can start to go looking for them. If it's going to be meaningful to think about an alliance between busworkers and other sections of the

community in defending and improving the service, these frictions will have to be acknowledged and overcome — at the same time as the structural political issues of finance and control are addressed. I can't see how any of us will want to defend or extend public transport if the first type of questions are ignored, just as we can't begin to do so if we ignore the second type.

*Yours Sincerely,  
Roger Hurcombe,  
Leeds 7.*

## Buskers & the law

Dear LOP,

1. My name is **Matthew**, not **Malcolm**.

2. The whole point of the tale in question was that I was summonsed for **Busking** not obstruction (the usual charge.) Busking is, in itself, not an offence anywhere except in Huddersfield, where, under the 1871 Improvement Act (sic) it is. If one busks one runs the risk of being nicked for obstruction or begging.

I have had both charges thrown out of court so many times that the police now have to resort to such charges as disorderly conduct (i.e. they make up a charge and pin it on — blanket charges like that are virtually impossible to get thrown out).

3. The Magistrates recommended that the police inform buskers of the law, and try not to waste court time. It

is still illegal to busk in Huddersfield.

A few other notes for followers of this admirable way of earning money. Don't go to Sheffield. Although its a Labour town they have a bye-law enabling the filth to confiscate your instrument and hold it until you turn up at court — and keep it until you pay your fine (if you get done).

If you get nicked in Leeds they'll probably keep you in a cell for 24 hours.

Don't have too much money in your hat/case/box — the police can keep it for evidence and even if you get an absolute discharge it's hard to get back.

There are no licences for busking — haven't been since the '30s. A hawker's licence won't do.

Please LOP, get things from the horses mouth!

*Matthew Saxophone  
Armley*

## Willie Whitelaw & Big D

Dear LOP,

How very typical and utterly witless of Big Doylem and his cute comment on 'the short sharp shock'. I refer of course to the last issue and though I know it has become standard to stereotype all Tories as evil, self righteous, uncaring, money grabbing capitalists this attack on the Home Secretary was completely unjustified. And no, I didn't vote Tory in the last General

Election and have no intention of doing so in the next one, but perhaps you would like to consider the following points:

1) Who voted against bringing back hanging despite the official Tory party line and his own Cabinet Leader? — William Whitelaw.

2) Who has pledged to review if not completely scrap the 'SUS' law which it is alleged is used by the police to harass young blacks? — William Whitelaw.

3) Who spoke out publicly against racial discrimination and said that everyone must take a more tolerant attitude to ethnic minorities in our society? — William Whitelaw.

4) Who has put forward a plan for reducing the lengths of custodial sentences served by non-violent offenders? — William Whitelaw.

And finally 5) Who had two men released from prison and promised a full enquiry (almost) immediately after their case had been brought to his attention (unlike previous Home Secretaries)? — altogether now, WILLIAM WHITELAW.

Whilst no one would deny the right of your otherwise worthy paper for bringing to light corruption, incompetence and bigotry in both local and national government, let's try to be fair and give credit where credit is due, eh? Whatever you, I, or anyone else in Leeds or the country may think of the Tory Party in general let us at least acknowledge that we have a Home Secretary who is a fair man if not a socialist or saint.

*Alexander Baron  
South Headingley  
See Big Doylem back page*