

ITINERANTS 'A CONSTANT SOURCE OF WORRY'

Irate Farmers Demand Old Road Closure

ANGRY SHEARSBY farmers are pressing the County Council to fence off an old road which runs in a loop off the Arnesby to Shearsby road, to keep out itinerant caravan dwellers.

For years itinerants have been coming to the site, and farmers have complained of having hedges and fences cut down, old rubbish and unwanted scrap thrown on their land, beasts let out of fields and sheep worried by dogs.

The loop road ceased to link the two villages ten years ago when a new highway was built—but the old stretch, which has been a "constant source of nuisance" to the County Council ever since, was left open at both ends.

Since then the itinerants have been coming and going. And recently a Shearsby village meeting called for the road to be blocked, with gates at each end.

Land Untenable

Three farmers have land bordering the old road, and one, Mr. R. Durrant, Bean Hill Farm, claims the itinerants have made the agricultural land either side of the road "absolutely untenable."

"I have had trouble with their dogs worrying my sheep, and last year in the lambing season this cost me about £200," he added.

Mr. Durrant said he had also had his fences and hedges cut, but the police had told him they could do nothing unless the offenders were caught red-handed.

Cows Escaped

Mr. Julian Timms, Wheathill Farm, told the Leicester Mercury that one night this week eight cows got out on to the road through a gap which had been "hacked" in a hedge.

"Our fields are full of their tin cans and bottles, and the hedgerows and ditches are filled with old cookers and other scrap," he added.

Mr. Tony Brook, of New Inn Farm, claimed that local people were nervous about going out at night because of the itinerants.

"We have had trouble with old prams and other scrap on the land, and when combine harvesting we have had to miss at least 10ft either side of the hedge. We

do not dare to stock the fields near the old road."

Mr. Brook, who had a water pipe cut by itinerants last year, added: "They are a constant source of worry and nuisance."

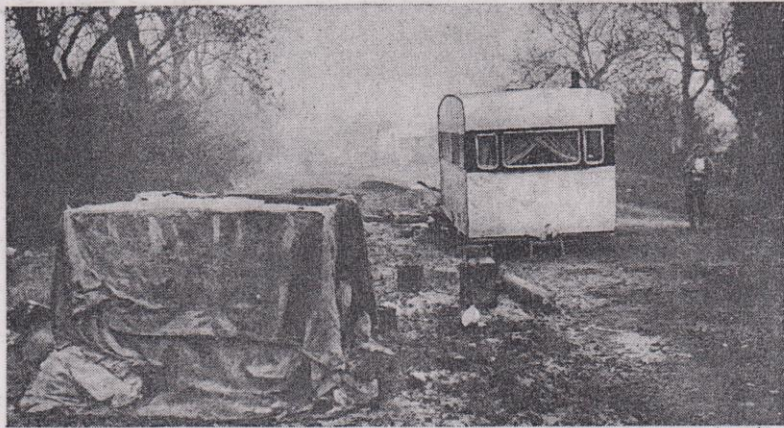
A spokesman for the Highways department of Leicestershire County Council said the road had been a constant nuisance.

"On one occasion the council sent eight five-ton lorries to clear away loads of scrap left by the itinerants," he said.

He added that the village meeting's proposal for the road to be closed—but leaving a footway as access—was being considered.



Mr. R. Durrant, a Shearsby farmer, who claims that land on either side of the old Arnesby to Shearsby road has been made "absolutely untenable" by itinerants.



Caravans on the unused loop of the road between Arnesby and Shearsby.



Mr. Robin Timms (left) and his brother Julian examine a hedge gap on their farm land bordering the road used by caravan dwellers.