

THE SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE
WATERWORKS COMPANY

NEWS REVIEW



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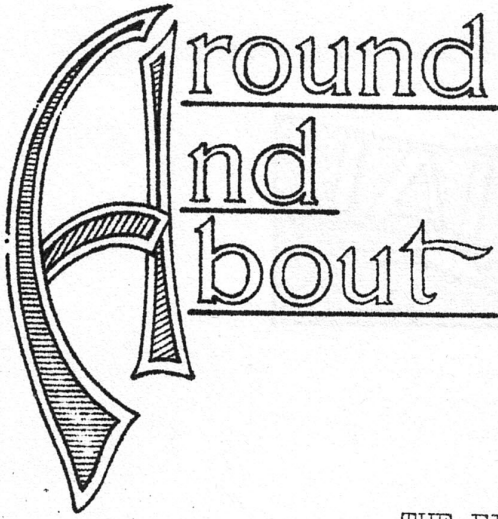


EDITORIAL

Since the last publication of the News Review in December, we have had a long spell of severe wintery weather but with the coming of Spring, the memory of bitter cold and the struggle with burst pipes etc. seems a long way off. Having experienced a complete "freeze-up" throughout the whole water system, I intend being prepared next year. I may have been born under the sign of Aquarius, but I object to having to carry water - literally - and the lagging with which we wrapped the pipes, too late, is now being removed and safely stored in readiness for next winter, when the Weatherman reports a severe frost.

The removal of the lagging is, incidentally, due to that annual upheaval - springcleaning. The menfolk say this is not necessary but the first sign of sun on the paintwork which has endured smoky fires, snow and fog for a whole winter, soon puts paid to that idea and I usually find they are the first with the suggestion that a paint brush is needed.

We all experience the feeling that there is too much work left at the end of our money, but I think too that in these busy days, we also find there is too much work left at the end of our week. Springcleaning coincides with early gardening time, and then the thought of the pussy willow and catkins, primroses, bluebells, daffodils etc. in the countryside always beckons one, and the problem is, which to do first. Oh, for an extra pair of hands occasionally.



Around nd bout

THE FISHERMAN

At the water edge of Stowe Pool I was asked by one of the Fishing Club members, "Who is that so-and-so who sends that article to the News Review - he knows no'te abartit". Whilst not altogether agreeing with my friend who is a good fisherman, what I write is solely an expression of my own ideas and experience, which I hope may be of interest to all readers, both anglers and non-anglers.

As I write I am reminded that today is the coarse fishing season Grand Final. The coarse fisherman respects the rules of the game and for the next three months he will not fish or take from the water any of the species of coarse fish, thus allowing the fish an uninterrupted period (provided they escape the cannibal) of courtship, honeymooning and spawning.

What of this "Stand off" fisherman? The majority will actually 'stand off' and their tackle will be laid aside and forgotten until required for the re-opening of the new season in June. To those in this category, please remember your tackle is valuable and the very key of your sport. Clean up those rods, dry and dress your lines and then, do not leave them in the hall stand or the knife box, but carefully store them until you are ready to give them the backyard test a few days before you launch the initial adventure of the new season. Remember your first fish may be that big chap and what a catastrophe if you lost him because your line had rotted in storage. Place your rods in their respective bags, hang in the spare room or corner of the wardrobe; and so with your lines, carefully dismantle the reels, according to the instructions, clean and grease - and yes - you're right again my friend - store them in cotton wool! In any case pack them carefully; even a moderately good reel will cost £8. today and that old, but still perfectly true wooden check reel that father used for twenty years before you, provided it fits your rod balance, is an asset to which you must not show disdain.

Springclean your creel or haversack, there may be a loose bit of bait in a corner which, like bugs in a water supply, will grow if not effectively removed. Place into the haversack all hooks, gut, artificial lures and miscellaneous gear and hang away carefully. Do not forget to carry out a test of all your gear a few days prior to the opening fish of the season.

Not all fisherman are of the "stand off" brigade. There is that stout hearted fellow, usually a good fisherman, who pursues that monster, the pike, throughout the closed coarse season. Then there is that gentleman of the angling world not too proud to fraternize with his coarse brother and enjoy it, but is primarily the hunter of game fish and who is now hunting the king salmon and romping in the first breath of spring, fascinated by that rippling water, the twittering of the birds in multiple variety, and the coming to life of a beautiful countryside. Such is the joy of angling and thereby no day is ever blank.

During April and May, for the opening date varies, our specialist, the trout fly fisherman comes into his own. During this period the eggs of the fly or moth, that for two years have survived the period of incubation at the bed of the stream, now rise to the surface to display to the world above their sex and beauty so fascinating. Beauty indeed that can only be displayed for the very short period of their life, for due to the trout, many are snapped up on their way to the surface or on the surface itself before finding time to unfold those delicate wings and fly to enjoy a few hours of life, which may start with a dance of the wedding march and end with an egg laying dive to the surface of the water, where the spent or dead fly again becomes a tasty morsel to the ever watchful trout.

The skill required of the trout fly fisherman during this early period is not so much the location of the fish, or which method of casting to employ, as the observation of the fly hatch, identifying the species to which the trout is rising, whether he is taking it on or below the surface, and matching his artificial or real lure to the type identified. After this he will have to hunt and locate his fish, and then, using the adjudged fly, his skill is called upon to make the perfect cast, whether the dry or the wet method is to be used.

During this early period of trout fishing, can anyone ask more of life than that which our trout fisherman is enjoying. Lovely enchanting countryside, and does it really matter if, when crossing the meadow, you place your foot in the wrong place, or if you don't land that 2 pounder. Have you been by the riverside and watched the swallow, in a graceful burst of speed, kiss the water in taking that spent fly from the surface, just as our trout does from the lower angle. Have you watched the buzzard waiting his opportunity, the graceful habits of the kingfisher, the nervous moorhen and the entertaining wagtail. I am not interested in the heron, he's a

crouched, humped-up, unattractive sort of fellow and can only catch fish from a standing position.

My article is not addressed to the expert fisherman. When he supersedes me I will gladly stand down and I promise to read his article with interest.

Piscatorial devotee

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HIBERNATORS

To hibernate is to withdraw to a warm climate and lapse into a state of sleep, which seems to the onlooker, perpetual in its depth. In our modern cities there are centres of hibernation. They are sometimes provided by the Civic Authorities - as are those havens of the homeless, the Reference Libraries. The only furnishings in such places are those necessary for study, and the pictorial hardness of the chairs blends with the Victorian austerity of the architecture. Unperturbed by such an academic environment and undisturbed by cavorting students, the hibernators sleep on.

They have characteristics denoting their particular profession, as have their brethren in the world. Their ears are excessively red - an outward sign of an inward strain caused by constant use of the hibernator's sixth sense, the capacity to listen when asleep. This capability is a gift inherited from their predecessors who lived in the bad old days when things were used only for the purpose for which they were originally constructed. The fear of retribution, in the shape of the Civic "Chucker-Outer" was very real to a Victorian hibernator. Only the redecoration of the Library's interior will end the winter of his modern counterpart, and force him to seek a fresh haven for the practice of his profession. But the ears of the sleepers are still perpetually cocked. This constitutes for a student of psychology an interesting example of hereditary factors. The uniform for this Legion of the Listless is comprised of an overcoat, Kaiser-like in its length, and a cap. They are usually blackened by grease from factories, long since vacated by these voluntary redundants. Hairy necks emerge from the overcoats, and stubbly chins nestle on coarse material. From massed nostrils comes the sound known as The Snorers' Symphony. The musical background provided by these nasal nocturnes has soothed and inspired many a Thesis writer. In front of this personified unconsciousness rests an encyclopedia unconsulted in its upside-downness. The publication date is of long ago, which lends weight to the surmise that hibernators are immortal and sleep from generation to generation.

Apprenticeship is necessary for every trade, and that of hibernating is no exception. One does not walk into a Reference Library, procure an encyclopedia, place it upside-down in front of one, and then proceed to hibernate. A novitiate is necessary for anyone seriously wishing to adopt for himself this ancient and long practised art. Brooch-makers and sock-menders are to be found in all civic houses of study. These are the apprentices, beginners in the life of sacrifice which calls only those who are prepared to renounce the world entirely and absolutely. Once the all absorbing sleep is sunk into there is no turning back. The hundred years' sleep of a hibernator is not terminated, as was that of the unconscious Princess by the kiss of a Prince. A gradual breaking in is the only way to cultivate a vocation to a life of suspended animation - suddenness would shock and repel. This then, is the explanation for the practice of various manual crafts within the portals of these heavens of hibernation. The craftsmen and craftswomen, - for equality reigns, although men predominate - are slowly leaving the world of work and sinking into a state which is perhaps reality. Gradually their heads nod and droop. Eventually another chest-hugger has joined the ranks of those who sleep on, oblivious of the activities of those around them, whether they be engaged in study, or in social intercourse behind the index-card stands.

Hydrogen bombs are dropped, Egyptian Crises come and go, but the hibernator sleeps on; he does no harm, practises no vice, hates not, and from envy he does not suffer. At first, in realisation of the rush of life in our modern world, we feel tempted to condemn the hibernator. But, can the most virtuous among us claim such a saintly string of negatives?

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ANGLING CLUB

Our Angling Club members are now well within a period of inactivity and are eagerly awaiting the 16th June next which signals the ending of the closed Season. Very happy memories are shared by all who took part in the eight contests fished last season, and if the aim this coming season is to equal such a programme then at least one section of the Company's Sport and Social Side can be considered established.

Our membership stands at 18 at the moment. Records show an average attendance of 11 at our 8 contests and when considering the fishing period penetrates the height of the holiday season, this proves a great keenness for the sport and an acknowledgment to the lovely environment of waters fished.

I appeal to any member of the Company who is interested in our sport, whether he be expert or novice, to give the Club his or her support by becoming a contributing member, or any action that will help to further the well-being of this most interesting section of our Sports and Social Life.

Our Annual General Meeting is arranged to take place at 7.30 p.m. in Friday, 27th April, at Walsall, when the presence of anyone wishing fishermen well is welcome.

STAFF ASSOCIATION EVENTS

ANNUAL DINNER & DANCE

The Twenty-sixth Annual Dinner and Dance of the Staff Association Club was held in the Imperial Hotel, on Friday, 23rd March 1956. This announcement has rather an unfamiliar ring, but though this is the first time in the history of the Association that the Annual Dinner has taken the form of a Dinner and Dance, at which members of the Staff were privileged to invite wives, husbands or fiancées, it was the fervent hope of most of the assembly that it would not be the last, and that what proved to be a very successful evening would be the forerunner of many more such occasions.

All the arrangements complete, Friday afternoon saw the staff hurriedly clearing up all necessary work in order to take advantage of the permission granted by the Engineer-in-Chief and the Secretary to leave the office early, and the mental vision of that glamorous dress must have given wings to the lady members, because the work was complete and everyone ready at the appointed time.

We were very disappointed that Lady Waters could not be present owing to illness but we were very pleased that Sir Arnold Waters, Alderman & Mrs. J.C. Burman, Mr. & Mrs. W.L. Barrows and Mr. & Mrs. E.G. Davies had been able to accept our invitations. We were very glad to have with us too, Mr. & Mrs. R.A. Robertson and Mr. & Mrs. A.W. Tibbenham.

Mr. & Mrs. Anderson were waiting in the Stafford Room to greet the guests and soon everyone was mingling together in the friendly atmosphere, renewing old friendships and talking over old times with colleagues from the district offices.

The Toastmaster announced that Dinner would be served in the Connaught Room and here the tables were tastefully laid, gaily decorated with spring flowers, the waitresses ready to attend to our needs, and we all did justice to an excellent meal.

Sir Arnold Waters, President of the Staff Association, proposed the Toast to the Staff Association and said we were breaking new ground on this occasion as it was the very first time that wives, husbands and fiancées were present, and he thought the idea an excellent one. He went on to say that the last time we had held the Dinner in the Imperial Hotel was in 1932, since which date the function had been held in the Canteen.

He said the Staff Association had had a successful year and asked those present to show their appreciation of the work which had been done by the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Honorary Treasurer, Honorary Secretary and the Committee.

Apologies had been received from Messrs. H. Spears, C.E. Hickman, G.A. Thompson, P. Gell, H. Kirk and J.H. Broadley, who regretted their inability to be with us but hoped we all enjoyed the evening.

In responding to the Toast, Mr. Anderson thanked the President for the complimentary remarks regarding the Staff Association and the members for the way it had been received. He reminded us that the Association could not accomplish much without the co-operation and help of the Chief Officials of the Company and thanked them for their continued interest in the affairs of the Association.

We had to compete with the influence of television, Mr. Anderson continued, and the Committee were always looking for new ideas. He instanced the demand by children for the Davy Crockett hat! Only an idea but an overwhelming success, and he expressed the hope that some new idea could be found for the benefit of the staff.

Mr. A.E. Fewtrell, Vice-Chairman of the Staff Association, proposed the Toast to the President, Vice-Presidents and Visitors, with a special welcome to our newest Vice-President, Mr. W.L. Barrows, and our Visitors. He said how sorry we all were to hear of the indisposition of Lady Waters and a bouquet of spring flowers was then handed to Sir Arnold Waters, with the request that he should present it to Lady Waters on our behalf, with the sincere wishes of the staff for a speedy recovery.

Special reference was made to the death of a former Vice-President, Mr. G. Povey, who was Chairman of the Association from 1925-6 and also Chairman of the Mutual Thrift Fund for many years.

The fact that some of the Vice-Presidents and their Ladies had been able to attend was greatly appreciated by the staff and Mr. Fewtrell assured them that the invitations to these functions were extended with all sincerity and it was always a great delight to have them with us.

Mr. W.L.Barrows replied on behalf of the President, five Vice-Presidents and Visitors, a rather formidable task he said, and thanked Mr. Fewtrell for the very charming way in which he had proposed the Toast. He was particularly pleased to reply as it gave him the opportunity to thank members of the Association for electing him as one of their Vice-Presidents when he joined the Board late in 1954, and also to say how much he appreciated the kindness shown to him. He remarked on the different types of water - hot water, in which we find ourselves when we arrive home to find burst pipes; fresh water for the fisherman; deep water, in which he found himself at that time, and also - our President - an excellent "Waterman" we would all agree.

As is usually the case, our Annual Dinner was followed by an abundance of entertaining oratory, sprinkled with humour, and as our Vice-Chairman said, "With the beginning and end of the speeches close enough together". But everyone was ready for the dancing, and once again we chatted with friends until the dining room was prepared for dancing.

What a colourful scene presented itself in the Ballroom! Do the men derive as much pleasure from seeing the ladies dressed in their finery (which after all is done mostly for the benefit of their men-folk) as the ladies themselves experience in the thrill of dressing for a dance?

The infectious gaiety of the younger members soon brought dancers on the floor. Even those who were devout in their reiterations previously that they did not dance - much - soon found the strains of the music too inviting to ignore. Dancing the Gay Gordon, The Paul Jones etc. broke down any likely barrier between staff and Officials and if the Scottish Clan did excel a little when dancing the Scottish Reel, one must remember we are most of us mere Sassenachs! The time was all too short and we wished we could enjoy all over again the exceedingly pleasant evening, but the Band struck up with Auld Lang Syne and with delighted cheers for our Host and Hostess, and to the laughter and handshakes with our friends, the evening came to a close.

Those responsible for the organisation of our first Dinner and Dance must have been amply rewarded by the pleasure it had so obviously given, and on hearing the repeated cries of "See you again next year"!

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Staff Association Club was held in the Canteen, Sheepcote Street, on Friday, 24th February, under the Chairmanship of Mr. D.B. Anderson.

Three scrutineers were chosen and whilst they adjourned to count the Voting Papers, the Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting were read and confirmed.

In his report to the meeting, the Chairman extended a welcome to all present and pointed out that this was the opportunity for members to discuss Staff Association matters in general, and that it was also the time when he and his committee gave an account of their work over the past twelve months.

Mr. Anderson said we had had a somewhat difficult year and whilst most of the Events which had been organised had been fairly well attended, there had been a decline in the attendance at Whist Drives, and he thought this might be due to the entertainment offered on television. The Annual Outing and Visit to Works had been combined owing to pressure of work, and this event had been particularly well attended. The Christmas Dance, as is usually the case, was a very successful evening.

Tribute was paid to the untiring work of the Entertainments Committee, who always tried to please members.


As far as the Canteen was concerned, we were just about holding our own, despite ever increasing costs, but Mr. Anderson warned members that we must not be too optimistic. Mr. Hatfield presented the accounts and it was unanimously resolved that letters of thanks should be sent to Mrs. Bowser, Mrs. Dayes, and Messrs. Wright, Rowan, Wigley, the Honorary Treasurer and the Honorary Auditors.

The President and Vice-Presidents were re-elected, with the exception of Mr. G. Povey who had passed away during the year. The Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer and Honorary Auditors were also re-elected, as was the Secretary of the Tobacco Club, and Miss Lees, Mrs. Bowser and Miss King were asked to carry on the duties of Joint Honorary Librarians for a further twelve months.

The result of the Ballot for the Executive Committee was as follows :-

Secretary's Dept.	Mrs. R.V.G. Bowser, Messrs. A.C. Britt, G.A. Royall, I.E. Wallis.
Engineer's Dept. (Inside Staff)	Miss D.F. Lees, Messrs. J.M. Adams, F.D. Rowan, R.J. Wright.
Lichfield Area & Outside Staff on Construction Work.	Mr. J. Fisher
Tipton Depot	Mr. C.B. Brennan

LADIES' PAGE



I first saw "Will-it" advertised in the Local Press and although at the time I had no intention of becoming a car owner, I decided, out of pure curiosity, to go and give it the 'once-over'.

On first sight I wasn't impressed, for one thing I could never imagine myself driving, let alone an old dilapidated 1937 Morris 8 Tourer. The more I looked, however, the more attached to it I seemed to get, and by the time I had had a 'spin' in it, I had set my heart on being the owner. The next, and most important thing, was to try and get Father interested, but as he has rather a poor view of women drivers, as most males seem to have, he took rather a lot of talking round. After a lot of ifs and buts he agreed to give me half the amount required, the only drawback now was how to make up the remainder. In the end my friend and I had a brainwave. What about becoming joint owners! With a struggle we managed to scrape together the necessary cash and "Jollop" was ours.

Of course, this was only the beginning, as we both had to learn to drive. Still other women had managed it, why shouldn't we?

We had a number of lessons without serious mishap. There was the odd occasion when we ran out of petrol and had to push the 'old bus' to a nearby garage, amidst a lot of girlish laughter; the situation seemed very amusing as we never imagined having to lower our dignity by having to push an 'apology' for a car. Little did we know what owners of archaic vehicles have to put up with! One thing we soon realised was that one certainly has to have a good sense of humour and no pride whatsoever where old cars are concerned.

Nevertheless, after a few more lessons we applied to take our Driving Test, although we were sure we didn't stand a chance of passing. We had heard so many lurid details of other people's downfalls. When the great day arrived we were both in a pretty bad state but after taking a huge blue pill each which was supposed to calm our nerves, we set out. Funnily enough we both got over our

nervous state, whether the pill really did the trick, or whether it was just a psychological effect I couldn't say. But we both managed to get through! Whether or not it was due to our capabilities or the way we "batted our eyelids" I just couldn't decide.

Feeling full of self importance after taking my test, I set out on my first drive. I didn't get very far before I heard the most awful clank, clank, clank coming from the region of the front off-side wheel. I got out, gave the wheel a good kick to see if it was loose, as I had always had a dread of a wheel dropping off. It seemed all right and I slowly proceeded on my way, but the noise gradually got worse. In the end I abandoned the car and 'phoned home for help. Apparently the wheel had only half collapsed - no wonder people had stared as I drove past. Such is the life of a motorist who doesn't understand the mechanism of a car!

I know I am in for a good deal of leg-pulling from my boy friends etc. My father too is prepared for anything, especially after having to come down late one night in dressing gown to unhitch me - and the car - from the gate post where I was hung perilously by the bumper bar after an unsuccessful attempt at driving in in the dark.

There was the time also when we backed into a tree, and we shall in future remember to take the 'spare', after having been stranded with a puncture.

Should anyone see two perspiring females, wearing heavy coats, high heels, and in the pouring rain, desperately pushing a car up and down a street, trying to get the engine to start, any help will be gratefully received.

My pocket money will disappear in an alarming way and I shall have to 'cut down' on many things, but I have a car, even if it is not a 1956 model. I am told that car owners exchange - and exchange - and exchange - until eventually they have an up-to-date model, so perhaps in a few years' time I may manage a post-war car. Even so, I am quite certain none will give me the pleasure I derived when I first took "Will-it" out for an airing.

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ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY

A Late Lark Singing
No More Shadows
Cotillion
The Morning Will Come
To The Woods No More
No Price for Freedom
Destination Unknown
Madonna in Hell
Winds of Heaven
Saracens Blade

Naomi Jacob
Monica Dickens
Georgette Heyer
Naomi Jacob
Ernest Raymond
Phillip Gibbs
Agatha Christie
Kathleen Tyson
Monica Dickens
Frank Yerby



DUDBRIDGE BLUES

I was sitting in my office in New Scotland Yard, thinking what a quiet land this would be if there were no naughty women, when Grey appeared at the door.

"It's ten o'clock, Sir William," he said, "shall I bring the dominoes?"

I shook my head. "I think it will be better if you bring me the Ranapore file - and" - I added, "you might let your girl friend know that you will be away for several days."

Two weeks before, the Rajah of Ranapore had visited a famous Midland City, and while there had suffered an astonishing loss. His jewel case containing the famous Ranapore Buddha had been stolen from his hotel room, and this gem-encrusted figure was valued at a quarter of a million pounds.

The local Police had made every effort to discover the perpetrators of this great steal, which - apart from its monetary value - was a prized religious relic, but up to now there was hardly a clue. Scotland Yard as well as M.I.5 had been called in, and I had thought the business so important as to forward details to Mr. Joseph R. Bourne of Dudbridge, who was perhaps better known in some quarters as Harborne Joe.

Grey came back with the file, and I proceeded to study the known facts. There was not much to go on, and I was just putting the papers aside when came a dramatic interruption. The door flew open, and a man in a peak cap, closely followed by one of my Inspectors, burst into the room. I pressed a Colt .44 onto the third button of his uniform jacket. "Now, my man", said I, "what is your business here?"

He spoke up like a gentleman. "I am a Turncock from Tipton", he said, "and I have brought an urgent letter from Harborne Joe".

And this is, roughly what the letter contained.

"Yesterday", (wrote Harborne Joe), "a Chinese Laundryman named Hang Lo walked into Dudbridge Police Station, and asked the Desk Sergeant to arrest him, as he had just run into four people with his car and feared he had killed them all. The Sergeant, observing that the man was suffering from the after-effects of opium, detained him while enquiries were made, and put him into a cell, where he was later found unconscious. Soon afterwards a local Tailor telephoned to say that someone had driven into his shop-window and badly damaged his models.

But the important point was this. The Chinaman in his delirium kept on repeating two words - "Buddha", and "Fat".

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Half an hour after the arrival of this Turncock guy, he, Grey and myself were in a fast car bound for Dudbridge. I had taken the precaution to pack a small trunk containing several changes of clothes. The Tipton man's name was Reginald St. Claire, and he took his turn at the wheel with Grey.

I sat in the back, and it must have been a strange surprise to these two men when they found, just before reaching Coventry, that their fellow-traveller was a Cantonese Lascar.

We reached Dudbridge in time for a late lunch and Grey telephoned the Manor only to learn that Harborne Joe had completely disappeared.

The Turncock, Reg, made some enquiries, and finding there had been no bursts recently, decided to stay with us for a little while, as his wife was a good plumber anyhow, and could easily carry on during his absence.

This suited me all right, as he and Grey looked as if they could be very useful in a rough-house, and I myself could still knock the ash off a cigarette at thirty paces.

Later I went around to the Dudbridge Bridewell, where it turned out that the Chinaman, Hang Lo, had been allowed out on bail. And here was another big surprise. Bail had been provided by no less a person than Sir Rowland Fawle, the Squire of Dudbridge, who had last been heard of in East Baluchistan.

It looked to me as though things were boiling up a bit in Dudbridge.

I arrived back at my hotel for dinner in my room, and yet another mysterious incident arose. Opening my napkin a paper containing some notes fell on my knee. I managed to hum a little, and the words that fitted the tune were "Heigh! Ho! Come to the Fair".

My two assistants were in the adjoining room, so I knocked on the wall twice, and Reg came in.

"Tell me", said I, "is there an Amusement Fair around here?"

He answered without hesitation. There was a fair ground only half a mile away, occupied now by some fellow who called himself Titch Little.

Ten minutes later we three had reached the Fair Ground, and for reasons of my own I left my two companions and wandered around. Very soon I came to a Hoopla Stall. The Young Lady in charge was working hard, and the customers rolling up in good style. She caught my eye, and gave me a very naughty wink, and my old heart began to beat at three times the normal rate. For this Hoopla girl was Lady Kitty Mallory, the daughter of my old friend the Earl of Glendennis, and a recent recruit to M.I.5.

I knew now who to look for. Thirty yards away was a Coconut Stall, and a big hefty man of about forty was inviting the customers to have a go. I walked over and passed him sixpence, and he handed me in return three battered wooden balls. The coconut went down at the third shot, and the Stall Attendant passed me a nut. As I walked away to where my two assistants waited, this fellow gave me an old-fashioned look. And well he might, because his name was Bob Trelawney, and the last time I had seen him he was commanding a Camel Corps in the Soudan.

Back at the Hotel I lost no time in prising open my nut, and sure enough there was a note inside.

"Will the Assistant Commissioner please investigate the Chinese Restaurant on the Four Oaks Road, Tipton, owned by Wan Loo".

I turned to Reg St. Claire. "Do you know Wan Loo's Restaurant in Tipton?"

"Yes, indeed!" he replied, in his pleasant Black Country tone. "It is on the Four Oaks Road, and not very far from the shop of a Chinese Undertaker".

"Who is he?" I enquired. "Ley Lo?"

Reg grinned. "No", he said, "his name is AH FAT."

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By eight the next morning we were watching both these places, and with the aid of a couple of plain-clothes men from Dudbridge (there being no Police in Tipton), managed to keep a check on all incomings and outgoings, for a full twentyfour hours.

From a summary it appeared that eighty-two Chinese had entered Wan Loo's, and thirty-one emerged, whereas fifteen had entered Ah Fat's and sixty-four departed. Following a conference on this I came to the conclusion that there might be some connection between the two places.

I sent word along to Trelawney and Lady Kitty. The one man I could not contact was Harborne Joe.

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Behold us then at eight o'clock that evening! Three slinking Chinamen, Grey, Reg and myself, making our way out through the Hotel rear entrance, and winding our way by different routes towards the Restaurant of Wan Loo.

There was not much difficulty about getting in. I just walked in, sat down with my back to the wall, and facing the door, ordered a feed of curry and rice, and wondered about the difficulties of getting out when the trouble started.

Everything seemed quiet, the place began to fill up, and then suddenly the door opened, and in walked the tallest and skinniest Chink I had ever seen.

He settled himself and was served without any delay, Wan Loo herself placing before him a huge dish of curry which must have been enough for a complete football team. To my amazement he scoffed the lot in about ten minutes, and called for another.

When he had emptied the third plate, and I was still wondering where he was putting it all, I felt a tug at my wide sleeve, and a poorly dressed Celestial whom I dimly recognised as Reg St. Claire pointed a finger at the lean and hungry one.

"That!" he whispered, in Ah Fat!"

To be continued

Personalia

NEW EMPLOYEES

Mr. G. Ford
Miss D. Peñn
Mr. G.F. Robinson
Miss B. Mellor
Miss M. Allman

Service Department
Postal Department
Architectural Department
Sandfields Laboratory
Sandfields Laboratory

RESIGNATIONS

Mr. E.J. Milner
Mr. R. Plant
Miss D. Raybould

Architectural Department
Distribution Department
Electrical/Mechanical Department

TRANSFER TO STAFF

Mr. H. Barlow

From Walsall to Sutton Depot

H.M. FORCES

Mr. P. Larkin, Sandfields Laboratory and Mr. K.M. Sargeant, Wood Green, have commenced their National Service, and we wish them every success.

Mr. R.B. Swingler, Revenue Department, and Mr. A. Bridgens, Distribution Department have completed their National Service and have resumed their duties in the Office.

RETIREMENTS

Mr. H. Walters. Cannock Depot. Retired 12th January aged 65 years, after 29 years' service.

Mr. R. Sutton Walsall Depot. Retired 7th March, aged 65 years, after 46 years' service.

DEATHS

We regret to report the death of Mr. H.S. Brownfoot, who passed away on the 9th April 1956 after a long and trying illness.

Mr. Brownfoot retired from the Company's service on the 4th July 1955, after 36 years' service, and it was the sincere wish of all his colleagues that the rest from his many and varied responsibilities would accelerate his return to full health. Mr. Brownfoot's cheery demeanour and his ready support of everything that was going on will be sadly missed by all those who had the pleasure of knowing him.

We also regret to report the following deaths :-

Mr. A.L. Conan	Hayley Green. Aged 62 years. Died 28th January after a short illness, after 4½ years' service.
Mr. J. Wheeler	Formerly Trenchman at Cannock Depot, retired in October 1938. Died on the 23rd January, aged 83 years.
Mr. H. Bate	Formerly Foreman Carpenter at Wood Green. Retired in February 1939. Died on the 11th January, aged 90 years.

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CONDOLENCE

We extend our deepest sympathy to Mr. A. Challenor, Cannock Depot, on the recent death of his father.

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We offer sincere congratulations to Mr. & Mrs. Job. Jones, who celebrated their Golden Wedding in December last.

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MARRIAGES

Congratulations to the following members of the staff on their recent marriages -

Miss D. Raybould	Electrical/Mechanical Dept. to Mr. Frank Cowley, on the 13th February
Mr. E. Clainey	Meter Dept. to Miss J. McDougall, on the 18th February.
Mr. J.N. Deakin	Laboratories. on the 31st March.

BIRTHS

- To Mr. & Mrs. G. Eades, Order Dept. a Daughter, on the 18th February.
- To Mr. & Mrs. A.B.Groves, a Daughter, on the 4th March.
- To Mr. & Mrs. D. Parsons, Sutton Coldfield Collector's Office,
a Son, on the 3rd March.
- To Mr. & Mrs. C.Jones, A Daughter, on the 2nd April.

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TABLE TENNIS

Congratulations to Mr. H. Irish, (Accountant's Department)
on winning the Individual League Championship of Harborne Div. 2.

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