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THE SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE  
WATERWORKS COMPANY

# NEWS REVIEW



HEAD OFFICES,  
SHEEPCOTE STREET.

APRIL 1960

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No. 1



# Foreword

Your Editor has very bravely invited me to write a Foreword for this issue of the 'News Review' and I have accepted, as I am very glad to have this opportunity of addressing you all.

Our Company by its very nature is spread over a large area and in our Pumping Stations a continuous watch goes on. This makes it impossible for us all to meet at one time, and were it not for the 'News Review' we should know little of each others activities.

I should like to tell you one thing of importance, and that is that I am as certain as one ever can be, that we shall continue to supply water as a Company for many years to come. Our area of supply may vary from time to time, but the style of direction to which we are all accustomed is unlikely to change.

This means that we can look ahead with confidence and that long term and often expensive schemes for providing fresh sources of water and improving our service to our customers can be safely launched.

The Company has been faithfully served over many years by those of you who have now retired; at present by as loyal and enthusiastic a team as anyone could hope for. And in the future? - Well, that largely depends on us, by our example to the rising generation in the zeal and zest we bring to our work.

J.C.BURMAN  
Chairman





# EDITORIAL

Our first photograph in this Issue needs very little introduction from me, for Mr. Burman is well known, chiefly as the recently elected Chairman of the Board of Directors, but in no less a degree for his services in public life.

Mr. Burman, who has very kindly consented to write a Foreword for this Issue, was Lord Mayor of Birmingham from November 1947 to May 1949 and Deputy Mayor from 1949-1950. A Trustee of the Institute of Fine Arts and a Life Governor of the University of Birmingham, he has held many other important appointments in both political and public spheres.

He was appointed County President of the St. John Ambulance Brigade in 1950 and Commander of the Order of St. John in 1955. He has also served on several Government Committees.

The latest of his many commitments is as a Member of the Royal Commission enquiring into the relationship between the Police and the Public in Great Britain.

As Chairman of the Company and President of the Staff Association Club, he has already shown keen interest in the welfare of all sections of the Company's employees.

The other photographs are of our two Chief Officers - the newly appointed Engineer-in-Chief and the Secretary to the Company.

If any evidence were needed of their interest in the wellbeing of the Company's employees it should not be forgotten that both are Trustees of the Employees' Mutual Thrift Fund, of which Mr. Tibbenham is the Chairman.

Mr. Taylor is President of the Benevolent Fund, Mr. Tibbenham is a Vice-President, and both are Vice-Presidents of the Staff Association Club. Mr. Taylor has also held the office of Chairman of the Staff Association Club and Mr. Tibbenham that of Vice-Chairman and was at one time the Treasurer of the Staff Canteen.

On behalf of all employees of the Company I would take this opportunity to assure them of our loyal support.

In conclusion, it would be ungracious of us not to acknowledge our thanks to the Board of Directors for the many privileges granted to the employees over the past years, in particular the recent concession of a Five Day Week and the Recognition for Long Service.

Norah Dayes  
Editor











# Around and about

## THE VOICE OF CANNOCK

Many of the visitors to our District so often only see the rows of terraced houses, the drunken shored-up buildings, sunken hedgerows and all the familiar legacies left in the Mining Villages. Yet within 3 miles northward of Cannock, dozens of cars and visitors from the industrial zones near Birmingham come over at weekends to picnic and wander over the broad Uplands of Cannock Chase. Originally reaching from Shugborough in one direction and to Aldridge in another, its large area has gradually been reduced in size with the development of the villages.

However, much of it still remains under the Forestry Commission.

Its ancient Historic Oaks have gone with the passing of time, to be replaced by belts of rich green pines of varying shades. To add to the sylvan scene rise the long swelling hills and tracts covered with fern, heather and gorse and a multitude of wild flowers. The Chase has always been a happy hunting ground for the Antiquary, possessing as it does much material for speculation and Historic Research. Cannock Chase was an important Forest - one of the 68 Forests of England at the time of the Roman Conquest. Who can say what battles have taken place - the Ancient Woods must have rung with warlike cries. And what butchery or deeds of valour have been performed under the shadow of its mighty Oaks.

Doctor Platt, writing in 1684, speaks of fifteen thousand trees being destroyed on the Chase during a mighty storm, and adds, "now the wind and sun are admitted to the woods the progress of the traveller is much easier, as we see the sun crowning the hills of Gentleshaw and Stile Cop".

Behind Gentleshaw Reservoir can still be seen the earthworks and ramparts of Castle Ring, standing 900 ft. above sea level as the remains of an Ancient British Fort. Historians endeavour to prove that it had



associations with Druid Ceremonies. From its grassy walls one has an unsurpassed view of the countryside for miles. Why not try a trip some pleasant afternoon this summer? The route? Well, here we go, passing through Cannock, proceeding towards Penkrige, over lovely Shoal Hill, turning right at Quarry Heath corner and coming up through lovely open country to Pottal crossroads. Cross the main Stafford Road and drive through the richly wooded lanes to Broadhurst Green. A map of the Chase here would be most helpful as one has a choice of diverse directions. You can pass over the crossroads up on to the open spaces of Penkrige Bank. There are no parking problems here, just draw on anywhere and have a picnic tea amongst the grass and heather. After tea, saunter due north along the Bridle paths into Sherbrook Valley; the traveller would feel well repaid, for the scene is one of great beauty. Resuming the journey from Penkrige Bank, take the first left at the foot of the hill down into Seven Springs which, by the way, belongs to the Company; turn right past Park House and proceed on to Etching Hill. This famous landmark can easily be identified with its flagstaff on the summit. Climb the verdant slopes and sit under the shadow of the flagpole and gaze for miles over the beautiful countryside. The evening sun seems to sigh for the day's departed glory, as it kisses the distant hilltops and woods which reflect its shadows over the little hamlets and the swaying gorse and heather.

Regretfully, we turn for home down Bower Lane on to the main Stafford Road; turn right along the main road into the little market town of Rugeley, and so to Hednesford.

When you are back in the smoke and grime of the City or red brick suburbia, you will doubtless think that we in the wilds are not so unfortunate after all.

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May we take this opportunity of thanking our late Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. R.A. Robertson, for the very kind things he said about us in the last Review. All my colleagues join me in wishing both Mr. & Mrs. Robertson good health and happiness in the years that lie ahead.

T.E.K.

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We understand that Miss O'Neil, who has just joined the Company's Staff as a Typist in the Meter Department, is the fifth generation of O'Neils to work for the Company. There should be an interesting story about this family for the News Review!

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"THE CATASTROPHY"  
A TRUE GHOST STORY.

Did you ever hear of the "Walklate Ghost"  
Which appeared near the Church at Burntwood?  
Would you care to hear the story?  
What's that? - I thought you would.  
The Midnight chimes had died away,  
The Asylum Valve was closed,  
And on his wayside seat,  
Our George, he must have dozed.  
Then suddenly through half closed Lids,  
He saw a fearful sight.  
A Ghostly form was creeping near,  
A Ghost all shining white.  
Closer crept the eerie form,  
George gripped his Bar the tighter,  
Thinking "If it comes too near,  
I'll crown the so and so blighter".  
Thoughts were streaming through George's mind,  
Thoughts like "Signing the Pledge",  
When our Ghost, it suddenly disappeared,  
Behind the Churchyard Hedge.  
"Well, well", said George now wide awake,  
"What do you think of that?"  
For his fearsome Ghost was nothing more  
Than someone's pet White Cat.

The above is a true incident which occurred while on a night test at Burntwood. When a chart had been fixed on Burntwood Deacon Meter, to get a true record of waste on the district, the Valve controlling the Mental Hospital was closed for one hour, and it was during this hour that any refreshments that were available were consumed. Hence the sitting on the "wayside seat".

S.J.M. Cannock.

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AN OLD BLACK COUNTRY BLACKSMITH'S ACCOUNT FOR  
SHOEING A HORSE

AFETCHINONIM	1/-
ASHUINONIM	2/6d
AFERTHOS	9d
ATEKINONIMUMAGEN	<u>1/-</u>
	<u>5/3d</u>

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### SOME RANDOM NOTES ON KINVER

To some older readers of these lines, the name Kinver brings back memories of the delightful journey into the village by means of the trams which used to run from Coalbourne Brook to Kinver. The Kinver-Shavers End pumping main follows the route of the tram track from Kinver to Stewponey and the Kinver Pumping Station now stands on the site of the terminus. A row of poplars which line the station drive were planted when the line was opened in 1905, and a lime tree in the station grounds marks the end of its course. The line was closed in 1928.

In those days the River Stour was suitable for boating, and motor boats and pleasure boats used to run between Kinver and the Hyde. There was an inclined weir near to the landing stage, and in times of flood or high water, pleasure boats sometimes accidentally "shot the rapids" - fortunately, as far as is known, without loss of life.

The old mill from which the boats started, and which is now the property of the Company, is interesting historically. In the Domesday Book, Kinver is reported as having four mills and this could be the site of one of them. While it is difficult to trace the age of the mill, it is known that during the Civil War it was used for the production of swords. It has been used for several purposes since then, including fork making and corn milling, and is now used as a sawmill. Until 1929, when the Company bought the property from the Seisdon Council, the mill was operated by a water wheel driven by the river Stour. The wheel - a breast wheel, to give it its correct classification - was made at Coalbrookdale. It was a massive piece of machinery, the shaft of it weighing about fourteen tons. One wheel was taken out in order to build the pumping station for the Kinver Water Works. This scheme was inaugurated by the Seisdon Rural District Council in 1908. The pumping equipment, consisting of two treble ram pumps driven by a water turbine, two stone panels built into the front wall of the pump house which adjoins the mill building, bear the names of the Kinver members of the Council, and the Engineer and Contractor for the scheme.

The old cottage which adjoins the mill building is not without interest. This, at one time, used to be a prison, and the door leading into the scullery, which used to be the cell, has a small opening which used to serve as a feeding hatch through which the prisoners were fed.

The River Stour, which is now badly polluted, was once a good fishing stream. It was very important as a means of supplying power to the many mills along its course and it is reputed as having had more mills for its length than any river in Europe. In 1663,



Andrew Yarranton made the river navigable between Stourbridge and Kidderminster, in order to take coal to the mills in Kidderminster. Andrew Yarranton was born at Astley, near Stourport. One of his accomplishments was the locking of the Dick Brook, which enters the Severn below Stourport, in order to supply coal to the ironworks in Shrawley Wood. The locks for this scheme, which are cut out of sandstone rock, are still there and can be seen to this day.

Yarranton's chief fault seems to be that he arrived on the scene too soon. Had he been born one hundred years later, he, and not James Brindley, would probably have been the pioneer of our canal system.

Among the interesting buildings in the vicinity of the pumping station is a fine half-timbered building at the top of the High Street, which used to be the workhouse.

The building standing on the rock and overlooking the station is the Roman Catholic Church. This was once the Police Court and a plaque on the gable end of the building states that it was built by public subscription. Next to this is a very old building which used to be the Kinver Grammar School. It was closed as a Grammar School in 1913, when the pupils were transferred to other schools in Kinver and Stourbridge. According to old records, Kinver had a Grammar School in the time of Queen Elizabeth The First.

The house next to the Grammar School was once the residence of Squire Price. His daughter left home at an early age to go on the stage, and was destined to become Kinver's most famous celebrity - Nancy Price, the Actress.

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#### SUTTON COLDFIELD

Retirement of Mr. J. Henney - Streetly Turncock.

Joe retired from the Company's employ on April 20th, after 32 years' service. After a spell as a Waste Inspector at Sutton Coldfield Depot, he was appointed Turncock on the Streetly District; during this time he has been the Depot representative on the Benevolent Fund and has always been keenly interested in all kinds of sport.

He is a gardener of no mean repute, which pastime he is still going to pursue. He has always been a very popular man in the area and has made many friends.

A young and fit 68 years is a good start to a happy retirement, and all good wishes go to him from his colleagues at the Depot.



Towards the end of 1959 we had the Benevolent Fund Meeting and at the close of the business the combined Male Voice Choir of the Depots rendered songs. Starting with the Happy Waterman and ending with Bless-em-All, they were asked to sing the words as printed in the script, and not their own versions, due to the tender years of the Barmaid.

'Ere the Festive Season had begun, the workers of Britain were faced with the greatest crisis since the Gun Powder Plot! The Brewery Strike was upon us, and George, arriving home before the usual hour of 10.30 p.m., buried his head upon his Wife's shoulder and wept. She, having assured herself that he still had money in his pocket, searched the auricles of his heart to find the cause of his anxiety, and learned that the Pub had sold out, and that there was no place so lonely as a Bar without Beer. The magnitude of this crisis may well be assessed by the fact that our local Police hit the headlines of the National Press, when the Black Maria was photographed outside the Brewery collecting urgent supplies.

Another event of note was the triumphant entry of the Tipton Gang into the Royal Town, flags flying, picks fixed, shovels at the ready. After sorting out and settling in (the ale wur much good at fust) they continue to reduce our arrears of work.

At the time of going to press the most controversial subject seems to be the advent of the 42 hour week. Welcomed by the single man, what of the married man? Time to do the garden now, cut the hedge, decorate the house, help the Wife with the chores? Perhaps time to write a small contribution for the News Review? What a boon this leisure time is going to be??

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Heard at the Annual Dinner -

After drinking rather heavily, two pals, at a local duck shoot, decided they were not having very much luck. Hardly a bird in sight. Finally, one stray bird flew over, and Bill raised his gun and down the bird came. "That was good" said his pal". "Good? - I must be off form, I reckon to get at least half a dozen from a flock like that."

And one for the Golfer -

The Golfer had reached the 18th hole - just a short put and he had won. A funeral procession passed at the time and the golfer paused and raised his hat. When he returned to the Clubhouse his pals said they could not help noticing his mark of respect. "Well, after all, I was married to the old woman for 25 years."

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### WOOD GREEN

At the last General Meeting of the Sports and Social Club it was suggested that a monthly get-together should be held, and it was finally decided that this should take the form of a snooker competition.

A room was booked at the "Horse and Jockey" and the first competition took place on the 23rd February. There were sixteen entrants so a time limit of twenty minutes was imposed on the games; this gave rise to some surprising results but that all added to the fun and we had worthy finalists in Derek Sargeant and Harry Brookes. For this game the time limit was lifted and Harry was the eventual winner after a most exciting contest. He was also 10/- better off, the prize money being taken from the shilling entrance fees.

Free sandwiches were provided and from the number of empty glasses on the tables it is assumed that everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

For the second evening on the 29th March we had seventeen competitors, and, in addition to the snooker, a set of dominoes and a pack of playing cards were provided. Once again the first round of snooker brought some surprises, the first being the defeat of Harry Brookes (giving seven points), but modesty prevents me saying any more about that game. More shocks followed when Harry Clark (receiving seven) beat Ernie Baker and Albert Cooke defeated Colin Jennings. It is difficult to account for these results, it seems that knock-out competitions always supply their 'giant killers'.

However, luck evens itself out and once again we had two very good finalists in Fred Noakes and Derek Sargeant. After a quiet opening in which Fred took a slight lead, Derek suddenly found his best form and soon had the table cleared for a convincing win.

These two evenings proved a great success and another one has been arranged for the 26th April, when it is hoped that all club members with the strength to lift a snooker cue will attend.

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### QUIZ ON PARLIAMENT

The first correct solution to be opened was sent in by Mr. M. Hackett of Wood Green, to whom the Prize of 10/6d has been sent.  
Congratulations!

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# STAFF ASSOCIATION EVENTS

## ANNUAL DINNER AND DANCE

The Thirtieth Annual Dinner of the Staff Association Club was held at the Imperial Hotel on Friday, 18th March, and was attended by 125 members and guests. Whilst the attendance was by no means a record, the event was a great success, in fact 125 of those present voted it "the best for years".

Mr. G. Alan Thompson - acting President in the absence of Mr. J. C. Burman - together with Mr. & Mrs. D. H. Robertson, gave a warm welcome to each of us as we arrived and within a very short time there was the usual convivial atmosphere associated with South Staffs functions.

It was encouraging to see so many people from the Depots and it was apparent from the conversations that much water had flown over our pipe bridges since many of us had met - happily not a great deal of water was allowed to flow into the glasses.

Amongst the throng, we were glad to see Mr. & Mrs. R. A. Robertson, both looking extremely well, in fact the "Old Man" looked as though he had just returned from the South of France.

Our President, Mr. J. C. Burman, was unavoidably prevented from being present at the start but had assured us that he would be with us if at all possible. Needless to say, the meal had barely started before Mr. & Mrs. Burman arrived and we all felt very honoured that with so many other calls on his time, Mr. Burman was able to be with us.

After an excellent meal, the Loyal Toast was drunk, cigars and cigarettes lighted, and we all sat back for the serious part of the evening's entertainment.

The Toast to the Staff Association Club was proposed by Mr. J. C. Burman, who, after an amusing reference to the part which British Railways and his wife had played in ensuring his arrival, said he was greatly honoured to be present for the first time as President and paid tribute to our immediate Past President, Sir Arnold Waters.



Mr. Burman asked us to share his well-founded opinion that, in spite of the various reforms we hear about the Water Industry, South Staffs would remain a Company as it now is for a long time, and not become part of a Local Authority or some Water Board.

As a token of the interest which the Directors had in the Staff, Mr. Burman said that it had recently been decided to present suitably engraved gold watches to those employees who have been with the Company for 25 years.

In his reply, Mr. D.H. Robertson expressed his pleasure in welcoming Mr. & Mrs. Burman and thanked Mr. Burman for accepting the office of President of our Association.

Reviewing the past year, Mr. Robertson referred to the many changes that had taken place, both within the Company and the Staff Association. With all these changes and the continued upward trend in the consumption of water, Mr. Robertson thought it an opportune time to assure Mr. Burman and our new Chief Officers of the loyal support of the staff.

Mr. Lamont, in proposing the Toast to the President, Vice-Presidents and Visitors, first asked Mrs. D.H. Robertson, on behalf of the Association, to present to Mrs. Burman a bouquet of flowers, which was received by her with a charming word of thanks.

Mr. Lamont thanked members of the Staff for electing him as Vice-Chairman of the Association and also for the very kind and generous way in which he had been received since joining the Company's staff in November of last year. "And now everyone knows that I have only  $24\frac{1}{2}$  years to go before I get a gold watch!" said Mr. Lamont.

He spoke of the great interest shown in the Association by the President and Vice-Presidents and assured them that this was greatly appreciated. Particular reference was made to that great friend of the Association, Sir Arnold Waters, and Mr. Lamont said he felt sure we should like a special message of thanks to be sent to Sir Arnold for all his kindness in the past.

We live in an age of keen competition, continued Mr. Lamont, which at times is so intense that one Company will not allow its rivals or their products to be mentioned. He was glad, therefore, to see that we had been broad-minded enough to permit some rival liquids to appear on the table!

Thanks were also extended to those who had helped to organise the evening's entertainment, and Mr. Lamont voiced the feelings of everyone, as it is well known that a great deal of meticulous care was always taken to ensure an evening without a hitch.



Mr. G. Alan Thompson, responding, apologised for the absence of his wife who had recently had two very bad attacks of pneumonia. (We all hope that, by this time, she is completely recovered).

In a brief and witty speech, Mr. Thompson said that it was a Mr. Lamont who had first introduced him to salmon poaching!

He thought it rather appropriate that he should reply to the Toast in view of the fact that he made his living largely out of water - a water which was much more potent (cheers!) and naturally much more expensive (cries of "shame"!).

Mr. Thompson praised the efficiency of the Association and referred to the reputation both National and International which the Company had for doing things well.

The speeches over, the dining room was quickly turned into a ballroom and the dancing continued at what appeared to be an ever quickening pace (no reflection on the band, which was excellent) until the small hours.

It was, indeed, an excellent evening. Amongst all the fun and the many laughs, perhaps the garage attendant had the biggest laugh - "Bring your car in, Sir - the Company will pay" - now I know why he gave me a sixpence change from the small gratuity proffered!

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Officers and Executive Committee appointed at the Annual General Meeting of the Staff Association Club held in the Canteen on Friday, 26th February, 1960.

It was unanimously resolved that J.C. Burman, Esq. be asked to accept the Presidential Chair, and that the name of Sir Arnold Waters should remain on the list and that the names of Messrs. R.H. Taylor and D.B. Anderson be added to the list of Vice-Presidents. The remaining Vice-Presidents were re-elected en-bloc.

CHAIRMAN

Mr. D.H. Robertson

HONORARY SECRETARY

Mr. C.H.F. Gilbert

VICE-CHAIRMAN

Mr. J. Lamont

HONORARY TREASURER

Mr. R.G. Clarke

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Miss M. Jones, Messrs. C.B. Brennan, J. Fisher, W.J. Flatt, K. Hand, C.E. Packwood, R.R. Pearsall, F.D. Rowan, R. Swingler, G.I. Temple, I.E. Wallism R.J. Wright.

HONORARY AUDITORS

Messrs. J.W. Whitworth and E. Burgess.

TOBACCO CLUB SECRETARY.

Mr. R.F. Chamberlain

HONORARY LIBRARIAN.

Mrs. R. Bowser

MAGAZINE CLUB

Mrs. H. Wesson





## NOTES AND NEWS

Two hundred and fifty years ago Birmingham had a population of somewhere in the region of 15,000 and was little more than a village. Today the City has a population of over a million and is the largest County Borough in England.

Birmingham is, of course, a product of the industrial revolution and most people, with the possible exception of its citizens, merely regard it as the commercial and industrial capital of the Midlands, and for this reason find it and its inhabitants somehow dull and uninteresting.

It is true that the City has very little night life and a poverty of this type of entertainment that is sometimes regarded as a 'must' in a big town. It is doubtful whether this ascetic existence can be attributed to any one thing in particular but it has been said that it has its origin in the early days of the town's phenomenal expansion.

Going back to the period of the restoration, Charles II, in 1662, ordained the Act of Uniformity. Now this Act demanded, under threat of expulsion, acknowledgment by the clergy of that time for the Book of Common Prayer, and furthermore, in order to achieve its purpose, the Five Mile Act was introduced, which prevented any expelled member of the ecclesiastic profession from coming within five miles of a Corporate Town to preach his subversion.

To many of the more puritanical nonconformists, this religious interference was untenable, and so many of them came to Birmingham, which by this time was beginning to establish itself as a manufacturing town, but was by no means regarded as a Town worthy of a Charter of Incorporation.

These welcome immigrants brought with them a variety of skills, an obvious individual loyalty, and a type of independence which fathered resourcefulness and adaptability, all of which have made a contribution to the now established character of the Midland Metropolis and its people.



Two men who, in the writer's opinion, made as great a contribution as anybody to the City's present status were Matthew Boulton and Joseph Chamberlain.

Matthew Boulton was born in Birmingham on September 3rd, 1728. Apart from his commercial ability and inventive genius, he displayed an understanding of human relationships in industry, the like of which would reflect credit upon any employer of today. Often he is a little overshadowed by the reputation of his partners, James Watt and William Murdock, but for how long they would have existed without Boulton's indefatigable optimism, his clarity of vision and commercial sagacity is now a matter of conjecture, but it is well known that it was often his spirit which sustained this industrial triumvirate through disappointment and adversity.

Having no history, it is really to be expected that Birmingham would allow Boulton's original Soho Factory to disappear. Nevertheless, it is something of a tragedy that this cradle of the industrial revolution, and in its time one of the finest and up-to-date manufacturing workshops in the world, employing as many as 700 workers under one roof, when it was the custom for an artisan to live over his one room place of work, should not have been preserved for posterity.

Boulton was one of the first manufacturers to introduce simultaneous production by specialisation, breaking down the finished product into a number of operations which were continuously performed by specialists in that aspect of work. To his craftsmen he was a kindly approachable man of a sanguine temperament, who understood their needs and was always conscious of their welfare. His manner inspired in his workers a desire to give of their best and it was often said of him that if he employed a man who did not come up to expectations, he would patiently train him to the standard of perfection he had, by his action, a right to expect.

He was always clever enough not to stifle initiative by imbuing his workers with the kind of security complex which comes as a result of the overpowering sanctimonious benevolence which is administered to workers in the soulless industrial empires of today.

His first meeting with Murdock is an indication of his character. It appears that the young Murdock called at the Soho Works one day in 1777, seeking employment, and in Watt's absence, was interviewed by the ever approachable Boulton. During this brief encounter Murdock had difficulty, as many people do, in finding something to do with his hands, and in order to keep them occupied was unconsciously transferring his hat from one hand to the other. This habit distracted Boulton's attention and his eyes became focused upon this rather unusual piece of headgear. Obviously it was not of cloth or felt and finally Boulton could no longer restrain an enquiry as to the precise nature of the material, to which the young Murdock replied - "It is trimmer, sir".



"Do you mean it is made of wood", asked Boulton. "Yes sir". "Then how is it made?". "I turned it on a lathe of my own making ".

Boulton was quick to perceive the young Murdock's ingenuity and his examination of the hat left him with no doubt as to Murdock's mechanical skill.

Although he could not offer him immediate employment, Boulton bade the young man to call again in the near future when he would do his best to find him employment. Needless to say, the second interview was successful for both of them.

There is in this story perhaps, the origin of the axiom -  
IF YOU WANT TO GET AHEAD GET A HAT.

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From a speech at the Annual Dinner -

We have heard much about Witch Doctors lately - a song has been written about one and it is reported that one did some water divining on the side to assist his local waterworks. One must be very careful, however, what one tells a Witch Doctor to do as the following story shows.

The Colonel of the Regiment who had made a surprise visit to a distant outpost in Central Africa was being entertained to dinner by his Officers there. Everything was going very well when the Colonel suddenly noticed a subaltern about 12 inches high running up the centre of the table. The little man stopped in front of him, saluted, refilled his glass and ran off. The Colonel thought "By Jove"; I've got a touch of the sun"! and he ignored the incident. But when it was repeated a second and third time he could stand it no longer. Turning to the Major on his right he said, "Smith, do you know, I distinctly saw a subaltern about 12 inches high run up the table and fill my glass".

The Major smiled a little sheepishly at this and said, "That's right Sir, that's Carruthers. You remember Carruthers". He clapped his hands and the little man came running up. "Carruthers, tell the Colonel how big you were before you told the Witch Doctor to jump in the river!"

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Following subscription lists circulated round the office recently, cheques were handed to the staff members concerned.

Mr. A.B.Groves put the money towards the purchase of a watch and I understand Mrs. Grindy has now purchased a walnut tea trolley and Mrs. Fenton a Royal Doulton Dinner Service. Mrs. Tipping, who left us at Christmas, and is now the proud Mother of Sarah Jayne, purchased an electric fire and Mr. Hatfield put the money received towards a wireless set. Mr. & Mrs. Tyldesley also received a cheque when they retired.



We were all very pleased when we heard that Mrs. Taylor (Canteen Cook) was making a long planned trip to Canada with her husband. Many, many times she must have said, "If only we could go to Canada to see our son some day", and when it was eventually found possible, it seemed almost too good to be true.

They left England at 7.30 p.m. on a Sunday in March, flying by Trans-Canada Air Lines to Vancouver and then on to Victoria Islands. On arriving there at 12.20 p.m. on Monday, one can only imagine their delight at seeing their son, daughter-in-law and granddaughter waiting for them, and, I am told, complete with camera, where they had their photographs taken coming down the steps - just like film stars, (and what a delightful snap it turned out to be).

Among many exciting outings, one particularly enjoyable one was the birthday celebration. Mrs. Taylor herself, son, daughter-in-law and granddaughter all had birthdays within a day or two of each other during the visit and they decided to have lunch on board the SS Princess Mary, a Restaurant Vessel permanently berthed on the river since she was 'pensioned' from the Service.

Although living in 'leafy Warwickshire', Mrs. Taylor was particularly struck by the thousands and thousands of trees there, towering high in the sky and mostly fir trees. The Canadian family live in a wooden bungalow, which is usual in that district, with a very large garden in which are 120 trees. "Like Christmas Trees - they just go out and chop one down". It must be a delightful scene in the winter months, with the Christmas Card view from their windows.

Mrs. Taylor Jnr. has her Mother living in the same district and when they want to visit her they just go to the bottom of the garden and sail along the lake in a small boat. There are no buses and as the nearest town is 13 miles away, catering has to be organised well in advance. Milk is delivered daily in quart bottles but when the butcher rings and says the lamb is in, a visit to the town is made by car and sufficient meat is bought to last a month. A large refrigerator is a necessity, of course, but this planned shopping must save a lot of time.

A visit was made to an open air cinema where they sat in their car watching the film and during the interval refreshments were served, as the show didn't finish until 12.30 a.m. The meal at a Chinese Restaurant wasn't too successful though, as Mrs. Taylor says the food was too rich. Another highlight was a day at Sooke, with its lovely beach about an hour's run in the car.

Even the thought of returning home wasn't too depressing because Mr. & Mrs. Taylor returned via Toronto to see Mrs. Taylor's sister. They hadn't met for 14 years so one can imagine the excitement of that meeting. "I shall always remember the scenery, the lakes, the trees, and oh! lots more, and it was lovely to see my family again. Perhaps, who knows, we may be able to go again", were Mrs. Taylor's comments on her return. Memories are very precious and I am sure both Mr. & Mrs. Taylor will re-live that visit many times in the years to come.

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# Personalia

## NEW EMPLOYEES

Mr. F.C.Barlow	Electrical/Mechanical Department
Miss G.Clayton	Civil Engineering Department
Mrs. N.B.Parkinson	Distribution Department
Mr. T.Mills	Wood Green
Miss M.A.O'Neil	Meter Department
Mr. M.T.W.Best	Sandfields
Mr. D.J.Sargent	Cannock

## RESIGNATIONS

Miss A.Oakes	Service Department
Miss A.M.Weaver	Distribution Department
Mr. A.B.Groves	Civil Engineering Department
Mr. G.B.Arch	Sandfields

## RETIREMENTS

Mr. E.J.Abberley, Engine Tenter, Maple Brook Pumping Station, retired on the 31st August 1959 after 40 years' service, aged 65 years. We very much regret that we omitted to record this in the December Issue.

Mr. J.Craddock, Asst.Turncock, Walsall, retired due to ill health on 1st February aged 55 years, after 31 years' service.

Mr. C.T.Broadhurst, Motor Driver, Walsall Depot, retired on the 12th March aged 62 years, after 19 years' service.

Mr. J.Henney, Waterman, Streetly, retired on the 20th April aged 68 years, after 32 years' service.

Mr. A.C.Britt Cradley Collector's Office, retired on the 19th January, aged 65 years, after 40 years' service.

Mr.& Mrs. Tyldesley, Caretakers, Head Office, retired on the 9th April, after 28 years' service.



## DEATHS

We regret to record the following deaths :-

Mr. R. Apted, Electrical/Mechanical Department, died on the 15th February, aged 42 years.

Mr. W. Chatfield, Formerly Engine Tenter, Pipe Hill, who retired in July 1949, died on the 11th February, aged 81 years.

Mr. J. Borman, Formerly Foreman, Little Hay, who retired in 1950, died on the 3rd January, aged 74 years.

Mr. W. Devall, Formerly Engine Tenter, Moors Gorse, who retired in March 1959, died on the 1st March, aged 65 years.

Mr. T. Toon, Formerly Assistant Turncock, Burton Depot, who retired in October 1945, died on the 19th February, aged 79 years.

Mr. G. L. Fearn, Formerly Labourer at Seedy Mill, who retired in July 1955, died on the 25th April, aged 78 years.

## CONDOLENCE

We extend deepest sympathy to Mr. J. Henny, on the death of his Son Gordon, who died on the 20th February, aged 36 years.

## MARRIAGES

We offer our congratulations and best wishes to -

Miss J. Groutage, who was married to Mr. M. Fenton on the 29th February,

Mr. H. Hatfield, who was married to Miss J. Morgan on the 29th February,

Mr. B. Walker, who was married to Miss P. Green on the 5th March.

## BIRTHS

To Mr. & Mrs. J. Bullock, Seedy Mill, a Son, David, on the 11th April.

To Mr. & Mrs. G. Eades, a Daughter, Helen Catherine, on the 7th February.

To Mr. & Mrs. G. Tipping, a Daughter, Sarah Jayne, on the 23rd January.

To Mr. & Mrs. H. E. P. Jones, a Son, Andrew, on the 12th March.

To Mr. & Mrs. A. Tunnicliffe, Chilcote, a Daughter, Susan Jane, on March 12th.

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Mr. A. Simkins wishes to thank everybody for the kind enquiries made regarding his wife's health. He is glad to say that the Specialist has now found the cause of the trouble and it is hoped that she will respond to treatment in about a month or two.

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We were very pleased to see Mr. Anderson early in the year, looking extremely well and enjoying his retirement.

Another welcome visitor was Miss E. Stockham, looking younger than when she left us 14 years ago, which surely proves that country life is the life for her. I understand she is living in a lovely cottage in the truly delightful district of Norton-sub-Hamdon in Somerset.