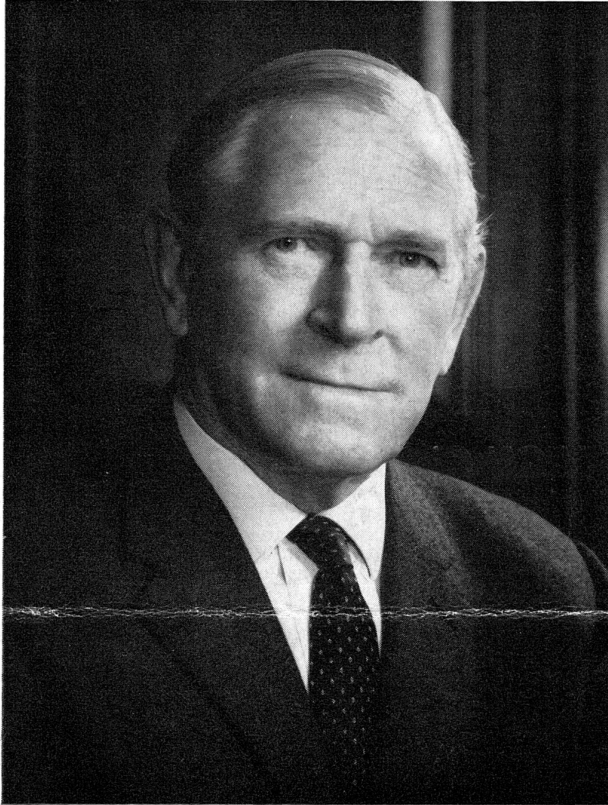




MAY, 1971

NEWS REVIEW

THE SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE WATERWORKS COMPANY NEWS SHEET



A FAREWELL MESSAGE FROM MR. R. H. TAYLOR

upon his retirement as Engineer-in-Chief

My work has always been of particular interest to me and I have found it extremely satisfying in all respects, involving as it does a very wide range of technical and managerial problems.

During my term as Engineer-in-Chief, I have been greatly helped by the Chairman and Board of Directors, to whom I owe a debt of gratitude for the unfailing support and encouragement which they have always given to me.

I have enjoyed a long and cordial association with my numerous colleagues and fellow employees in the Company and I have a wide circle of friends throughout the water industry. The inevitable disruption of most of these long-standing friendships, both inside and outside the Company will create a vacuum which will be hard to fill.

In my retirement I am looking forward to being able to devote more time to my many interests and pastimes and to the opportunity of satisfying my interest in travel, which has been greatly stimulated by my recent overseas trips.

Mr. James Lamont takes over from me as the seventh Engineer-in-Chief of the Company since its inception in 1853 and in so doing he inherits the responsibility of maintaining the position of the Company as one of the leading water undertakings in the British Isles.

Mr. Lamont was appointed as my Deputy in 1960 when I took over from Mr. Robertson and apart from three years in the R.A.F. he, too, has spent his whole career in the water industry, with a variety of different undertakings.

His enthusiastic approach to his work and his wide experience will be of considerable value in his new appointment and I hand over to him with the greatest confidence and with my best wishes.

Mr. Lamont will be ably supported by Mr. W. A. Markham as his Deputy, a post for which

he is very well equipped, having been with the Company since 1958 and Distribution Engineer since 1961.

There will be an opportunity of saying farewell to many of the Company's staff and employees before I retire, but to those whom I am unable to see personally, and I include all retired employees of the Company, I send my best wishes through the medium of the News Review.

I would add my sincere thanks for the assistance and whole-hearted support which I have received from all employees of the Company, past and present, without which my job would have been quite untenable. I am confident that my successor will be equally well served.

RANDAL H. TAYLOR.

Editor's footnote: All employees of the Company wish Mr. and Mrs. Taylor a long and happy retirement.

An appreciation of Mr. Taylor's outstanding contribution to the Company will be included in the next issue.

EDITORIAL

THIS is a prototype, new look, news review. It is intended to be easy to read, easy to handle and easy to produce; three essentials for any modern publication.

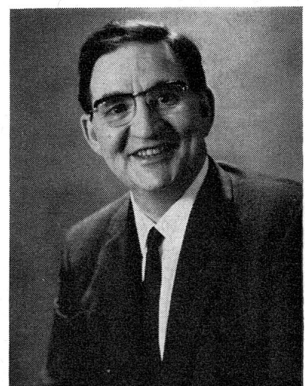
Why change now? Well, Norah Dayes, who edited the existing news review for going on 18 years, retired in September, therefore change in the format is inevitable even if we only appoint a new editor; however, we intend more.

It is hoped to produce a sheet, similar to this, six times a year, expressing the views and news of the Company and of the employees. To do this we need your help.

Whether you are a Senior Engineer or an office junior, don't wait to be asked to contribute. If you'd like to share an amusing experience, advertise a coming event, or air your point of view, put it on paper and send it to the "News Review," Personnel Office, Birmingham. Or if you'd be willing to help in collecting news and opinions at your Area Office, laboratory or department at Birmingham Office, let me know.

If you don't like this prototype, don't just throw it in the bin and think what a load of rubbish. Tell us what you would like to see.

**BRONWYN THURSTON,
Acting Editor.**



Mr. James Lamont

NO MONEY - NO WATER!

THE majority of the Staff will be aware that during 1969 a procedure was adopted whereby consumers who habitually failed to pay their water rate had the water supply to their premises cut off. This is probably one of the most unpopular duties that has to be carried out at Area Offices, but is necessary in order to avoid substantial loss of revenue.

The procedure is inaugurated following several approaches by the Secretary's representative to the consumer who has failed to pay the water account. If, in spite of the warnings the consumer receives, payment is still not forthcoming, the water supply is terminated at the instigation of the Revenue Officer, following which the Local Authority is advised.

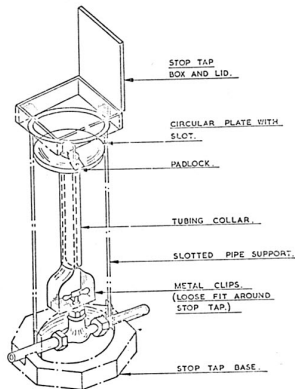
Interruption of the water is achieved by shutting off the main stop tap which is then fitted with a lock as illustrated in the accompanying sketch. The locking device is passed into the stop tap chamber and fixed over the crutch of the closed main stop tap, thus preventing the tap being operated. The two halves of the locking device are subsequently secured by a padlock.

In cases where a water supply is obtained from a common service pipe, to operate the shared stop tap would, of course, deprive other consumers of their water supply. In such a situation the branch pipe to the offending consumer's house is physically cut off (a small excavation may be needed) if access to the premises is obtainable. The water supply is not re-connected until all the outstanding monies have been paid, together with a re-connection fee of £1 where a lock has been fitted and £4.50 where a physical cut off has been carried out. Every effort is made to avoid hardship and the procedure for terminating water supplies is solely intended to affect consumers who make a general practice of either delaying or refusing to pay their water account.

The procedure has produced many problems, both administratively and personally. Locked gates, savage dogs, antiquated stop tap boxes and even threats of violence (in one such case an Assistant Superintendent was actually threatened with death!) all tend to make this work sometimes unpleasant. In some rural areas it has even been found that farmers expect payment for water to be collected in accordance with his arrangements with other "trades people."

There is here a problem of public relations which might be completely destroyed by careless handling of such a sensitive matter.

It is gratifying to know that the Company has supervisors, workmen, inspectors and plum-



bers of a calibre able to carry out such exacting duties as these with common sense, sympathy where necessary and the right amount of firmness.

Emotion, too, can play a great part in the successful completion of the shut off. Not unreasonably, the Company's workmen are sometimes in great sympathy with the consumer, particularly when they discover that children reside at the house where the water supply is to be cut off.

However, cases of genuine hardship can be referred back to the Revenue Officer. Such cases will always receive sympathetic consideration and it is sometimes possible for consumers to obtain financial assistance from local authorities, once the appropriate authority is aware of the situation.

It is indeed unfortunate that even in these comparatively affluent times, such drastic remedies are necessary by the Company to obtain payment of probably the lowest household bill. However, we must all bear in mind that if such measures were not taken to recover this money, the great majority of consumers who pay their accounts promptly are subsidising the reluctant minority, thus creating a very unfair situation.

It is possible that in time to come a system will be devised whereby payment can be obtained without resorting to direct action, but in the absence of such a Utopian state of affairs the Company have to insist that no money definitely means no water.

D. J. PARSONS.

Appointments

which came into effect from 1st April, 1971

BIRMINGHAM OFFICE

Mr. J. Lamont, Deputy Engineer-in-Chief to Engineer-in-Chief.

Mr. W. A. Markham, Distribution Engineer to Deputy Engineer-in-Chief.

Mr. D. S. Brown, Construction Engineer to Distribution Engineer.

Mr. M. P. Upstone, Deputy Construction Engineer to Construction Engineer.

Mr. D. J. Outen, Resident Engineer, Sedgeley, to Deputy Construction Engineer.

Mr. E. A. S. Gadsby, Birmingham Corporation Water Dept. to Deputy Distribution Engineer.

BURTON AREA OFFICE

Mr. D. Parker, Deputy Area Superintendent, Burton, to Temporary Area Superintendent, Burton, from 31st January, 1971.

Mr. C. E. J. Robinson, Assistant Superintendent, Burton, to Temporary Deputy Area Superintendent, from 31st January, 1971.

BIRTHS

Girls Galore!

Congratulations to

Tony and Kay Morris on the birth of a daughter, **Rebecca**, 15th August, 1970.

John and Sylvia Farley on the birth of a daughter, **Emma**, 7th September, 1970.

Dennis and Hilda Harrison on the birth of a daughter, **Elaine**, 19th November, 1970.

Alan and Carol Jones on the birth of a daughter, **Rowena Kate**, 11th February, 1971.

SPACE RESERVED FOR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"SUGGSAGA"

TWENTY-FIVE years ago, in 1946, the World tried to forget Hitler, and Winston Churchill coined the phrase "Iron Curtain," Derby County won the F.A. Cup, and "Airborne" won the Derby.

In Sheepcote Street, Mr. R. A. Robertson reigned as Engineer-in-Chief, although his predecessor, Mr. F. J. Dixon, a venerable figure in green plus-fours, was still retained as Consultant on the proposed Blithfield Scheme. At Company pumping-stations, the steam engines consumed over 1,000 tons of coal each week and gas engines still existed at Cawney Hill and Shavers End. Tomatoes grew on the boiler-house wall at Shenstone and notices at Head Office exhorted members of the Staff to "Do it now." Into what now seems to have been an atmosphere of almost Victorian stability and calm, I commenced my career with the Company as Post-Boy.

I travelled to and from work by tram at a total cost of 6d.—the famous 'Workman's return.' For those who came along the Coventry Road, there was the trolley-bus and every morning the steam trains converged on a filthy and unmodernised New Street Station. On the way to work, one could still be run over by a "Mitchells and Butlers" steam lorry and, having safely arrived in Sheepcote Street one might have an opportunity to admire that marvel of modern motion—Miss Cutler's auto-cycle!

In 1946, the Free World was threatened by Stalin's very militant brand of Communism, the Jews and Arabs did battle in Palestine, the Nazi War-Criminals were brought to trial and I was very nearly annihilated by Miss Parry. In my anxiety to get to lunch in the canteen, probably my favourite meal of rabbit, I left a tube of Gestetner ink, without its stopper, hanging over the table in what is now the Conference Room. When Miss Parry came through, the inevitable happened. A smear of ink ruined what had been a splendid dress procured not only with money but also with precious clothing-coupons. During the next few moments, my knowledge of the English vernacular increased very rapidly!

A great deal of water has flowed down the Blithe during the past twenty-five years but every time I see the lift, basically the same, or inhale what is to me the unique and rather pleasing odour in the Engineer's oak-panelled waiting-room, where as Post-Boy I helped sort out the mail, I recall that year when I joined the Company, 1946.

JOHN SUGG.

OBITUARIES

MR. G. ALAN THOMPSON

IT is with deep regret that the sudden death of Mr. G. Alan Thompson on the 20th March, 1971, is reported. Mr. Thompson joined the Board of Directors in 1936 and achieved some 35 years' service, but he had in fact decided not to stand for re-election at the Annual General Meeting in 1971.

Mr. Thompson will be remembered for his friendship and interest in all matters relating to the employees of the Company, at Head Office and on the district; he will be sadly missed in all the Company's affairs. Our sincere sympathy is extended to Mrs. Thompson and to his family in their great loss.

Secretary's Office.
14th April, 1971.

PHILIP BURTON

IT was with sincere regret that we learned of the death of Mr. Philip Burton, the Company's Internal Auditor. He was, as many of us know, a gentleman in every respect. He exercised unflinching tact in making the essentially prying enquiries that his job required. Among his many attributes was a love of sport; he represented the Company for a number of years at cricket and table tennis.

We shall miss him very much for so many things, not least his genuine interest in the welfare of his colleagues.

DEATHS

Mr. P. J. Burton, 62, who was the Company's Internal Auditor, died on December 13th, 1970.

Mr. J. H. Clarke, 74, former Blacksmith's Striker, died on January 13th, 1971.

Mr. E. Reed, 90, former Waterman at Walsall, died on January 10th, 1971.

Mrs. W. Tranter, wife of former Foreman at Prestwood Pumping Station, died on December 31st, 1970.

Mr. G. E. Turner, 75, who was a Foreman Painter at Walsall before his retirement, died on November 21st, 1970.

Mr. H. Hollis, former Station Labourer at Maple Brook, died as a result of motor accident on March 3rd, 1971.

WATERMAN IN FLIGHT



This article is from Mike West who, before joining the Company, was Britain's only full-time Sky-Diving Instructor, and introduced Sky-Diving to the Midlands. Mike started work at Hampton Loade, but is now Waterman for the Kingswinford District.

* * * * *

CAN you imagine yourself and a friend 14,000 feet high in the sky, with the clouds and the country spread out like a patchwork quilt beneath you? The door of your single-engine aircraft is missing, you sit, cramped, deafened by the muffled roar of the wind and engine, frozen, trussed up like Houdini, in a parachute rig. You and your pilot are searching for an airfield somewhere below, earlier you worked out an exit point that would get you safely to the landing area, taking into consideration the wind speeds at different levels.

Suddenly, the clouds part and your target is below. You guide your deafened pilot in, with hand signals only. Once over the exit point you prepare to leave the fragile machine. As you reach out to get into position, the wind whistles, freezes and buffets you, trying to force you on your way before you are ready. Then you're set. You nod to your comrade and let go.

You somersault, catching a glimpse of your companion following, and the underside of the aircraft as it shoots away from you. There's no wind, no noise, now. By spreading your arms you can fly like Superman, supported by a cushion of air; hanging in space, soundless, detached from this world completely, laying flat face down to earth, just turning your body the way you want to go. You can loop forward or backwards, or barrel roll. You can do anything, except go up again.

Where's your companion? He was with you, you saw him once. By adjusting his body position he has increased his falling rate from 180 m.p.h. to 200 m.p.h. to catch you up and flare out at your level. Both now falling at the same rate, you manoeuvre your bodies so that you link up with each other. This is the most exhilarating experience you can have, bar one!

It is important to keep constant watch on your altimeter, parachutes must be opened at 2,000 feet. At 3,000 feet you break apart and manoeuvre your bodies as far from each other as necessary to pull your ripcord. Within two seconds your chute has halted your 180 m.p.h. dash to the ground and all you feel is a gentle comforting jerk as it blossoms.

Your steerable parachute can be manoeuvred like a snail. You steer it to a target, and if you are good you can land on a sixpence every time. About 100 feet from the ground, feet and knees together, and five seconds later you thump in. There are, of course, other ways of spending Sunday morning.

That exercise takes three-quarters of an hour flying time to get the required height, 72 seconds free-falling before opening your parachute, and 120 seconds on your opened parachute, it costs about £2 per time.

NORAH DAYES

IN 1938, Norah Dayes' husband, Leslie, took up an appointment in the Town Clerk's Department of Birmingham Corporation.

Before her marriage she had worked for Spillers Flour Mill in Hull, as a Secretary/Short-hand Typist. Within months of coming to Birmingham her husband joined the Forces and Norah decided to return to her former occupation.

Fortunately she decided instead to work for South Staffordshire Waterworks Company. Throughout the 30 or so years during which she was employed here, the Company have never once regretted that decision. She quickly acquired a reputation for a sustained capacity for work. Her productivity was phenomenal. She could type accurately at dictation speed, which is an extremely difficult thing to achieve. True to the saying that if you want something done, take it to someone who is busy, she became Editor of the News Review in 1952, and was responsible for the publication of every issue since that date. Because of a natural reluctance by most people to put pen to paper, she frequently finished up writing the complete edition.

Norah had all the qualities of a Yorkshire woman, not least of which were thoroughness, integrity, helpfulness and a capacity for plain speaking when necessary.

In her career she worked for successive Heads of Service Department. For many of the people she worked with a most memorable event was the farewell tribute held for her by Mr. Thomas at the Old Vicarage, Middleton, just before she retired.

BERNARD HAWKLEY.

STOP PRESS Management of water

Most of our readers will have seen from their newspapers that the Central Advisory Water Committee have recommended the Government to set up a small number of Regional Water Authorities to control Planning Co-ordination, Conservation, Water Supply, Sewerage and Sewage Disposal.

The Government have said they expect to publish their conclusions on the Committee's report shortly and it is therefore clearly too early to give any information regarding the likely impact on the Company.

The Company will, however, keep readers informed of progress.

The Tamworth Herald Co., Ltd.

FORMATION OF A HEAD OFFICE FOOTBALL TEAM



B. Walker (Team Manager), M. Hall, B. Bayliss, J. Bird, M. Asbury, M. Crowe, T. Smith, T. Tapper, T. Stanton, P. Lockyer, J. Coles, A. Birchall.

BURTON AREA NEWS . . .

AT Burton Area the last quarter of the year 1970 saw increased interest in social activities, and the nucleus of a Sports and Social Club was formed.

Football was top of the list and we began by playing friendly matches with local clubs. The team has won three matches, drawn two and lost only one. In late December a chance to fill a vacancy in the local Sunday League was snapped up, and so we now have the "Waterworks United" turning out every Sunday to do battle for vital league points, looking most resplendent in tangerine and black shirts.

A further venture we embarked upon was the hiring of a school gymnasium, for one night a month, to enable training sessions to be held. Many of us go and enjoy the P.T. and indoor football, and dare I say some of us have already seen a reduction in our waist lines (reminding us of what we used to be).

To cater for those interested in other activities we looked around for suitable premises. Fortunately we had to go no further than the Sports and Social Club of a local firm, "Delaney Galley," who are situated close to Burton Area Office. They granted us Associate Membership and this enables approximately 20 of our lads to enjoy full club facilities.

We intend to form teams to play darts, dominoes, table tennis, etc., and we hope that eventually we can arrange social evenings with any other interested Depots in the Company.

A New Year's Day dance held at the club was thoroughly enjoyed by the Depot members

and their wives and girlfriends. We are indeed fortunate in having these club facilities made available to us by "Delaney Galley."

Workwise saw the Depot commence laying the 24in. dia. main, in early January, along Shobnall Road. This main on completion will supply additional water to the Allied Breweries (Ind Coope) by linking up to the two 12in. dia. mains laid during 1970. I can recall when before the last war the local breweries would only brew beer with South Staffordshire water if their own wells failed.

The local breweries have undergone radical changes during the last decade, most have been re-built. Gone are the acres of malthouses, and with the passing of the wooden cask the day of the cooper is over.

Amalgamations have wiped out firms like Worthingtons — their brewery has been completely demolished, and later this year the firm of Trumans closes down and leaves the town.

Burton water is no longer transported to the breweries in the North of England; the magical "gypsum rock" which made Burton wells famous the world over for brewing purposes is now added by the chemist to any type of water. So dies a local claim we "Burtonions" cherished, that of having the finest brewing water in the world.

C. E. J. ROBINSON.

AFTER playing friendly matches for a number of years, members of the Head Office staff decided to form a regular team to play in a recognised League.

The first priority was to find a suitable expanse of ground on which to put a football pitch. The Company endeavoured to help in this direction by offering sites at various Pumping Stations but unfortunately none were found suitable, either on the ground of cost of development or location.

We had, therefore, to turn to the other alternative of playing on a Park's pitch. Applications were made to various Parks Committees and we finally obtained a pitch at Palfrey Park, Walsall.

Finance was another obstacle and, as we wanted to be self-supporting, the Football Club Committee put their heads together and came up with the idea of Discotheques and the Tote, both of which have provided us with sufficient initial capital (about £80.00) and

regular income to cover all running expenses.

Entering the 3rd Division of the Bloxwich Combination, we commenced playing in September of 1970. After an initial three wins in three games we have settled into a middle-of-the-table position which is quite satisfactory taking into account the fact that we are a new side and we have not quite woven ourselves into a team rather than individuals.

We have reached the Semi-final of the Walsall Observer Cup and are in Round 2 of the Homesshaw Cup.

The one thing we would like is a little more vocal support from members of the staff. We have a regular following of about six, including our President, Mr. Wallis, and Albert Charles and his son, whom we elected Team Mascot and presented with a football shirt, shorts and socks, to cheer him up after a recent visit to hospital. In return, he has given all the members of the club the honorary title of "Uncle."

JOHN EARLE.

HIGH-CLASS PING-PONG

ON Thursday, 22nd October, the Company's table tennis team went to see the international match between Japan and England.

England were represented by C. Barnes, D. Neale, Miss K. Mathews and Mrs. D. Piddock. Barnes got England off to a flying start by unexpectedly beating the world champion, S. Itoh, in two straight games but this victory was soon nullified by J. Imano, Japan's No. 6 ranking, easily beating D. Neale, England's No. 2, by the same margin.

Barnes and Neale won the Men's Doubles but the remaining games went to Japan, who won the series by 5 matches to 2.

Japan, who are the present World Champions, proved too expert for the English team, nevertheless it was a pleasant evening's entertainment.

Company team report

At the half-way stage of the season, the "A" team in Division 1 of the West Birmingham League have achieved the following record: P9, W4, D1, L4. They have made real progress since 1967 when they were in Division 3 of this League.

The "B" team were promoted from Division 4 of the Business Homes League and their record is as follows: P8, W4, D1, L3.

This team is at present lying in 4th position and there is every indication that they will improve on this before the season ends.

JOHN STOCK.

Retirements

THANK YOU AND ALL GOOD WISHES TO—

Mr. T. H. Baker, Ganger, Tipton; March, 1971.

Mr. E. Borley, Ganger, Cannock; February, 1971.

Mr. G. W. Bott, Waterman, Walsall; February, 1971.

Mr. R. Cadwallader, Pumping Station Attendant, Ashwood; October, 1970.

Mr. S. C. Collins, Filter Operator, Sandfields; February, 1971.

Mr. T. C. Collins, Waterman, Walsall; March, 1971.

Mrs. N. Dayes, Clerk/Typist, Admin. Dept., Birmingham; September, 1970.

Mr. W. J. Flatt, Area Superintendent, Burton; January, 1970.

Mr. W. King, Garage Foreman, Birmingham; February, 1971.

Mr. G. W. Pye, Estate Hand, Blithfield; December, 1970.

Mr. D. O'Regan, Trenchman, Cannock; October, 1970.

Mr. M. Round, Blacksmith, Wood Green; October, 1970.

Mr. E. Severn, Pumping Station Attendant, Wood Green; September, 1970.

Mr. W. Spittle, Fittings Tester, Wood Green; November, 1970.