



# NEWS REVIEW

THE SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE WATERWORKS COMPANY NEWS SHEET

## PENSIONERS' OUTING

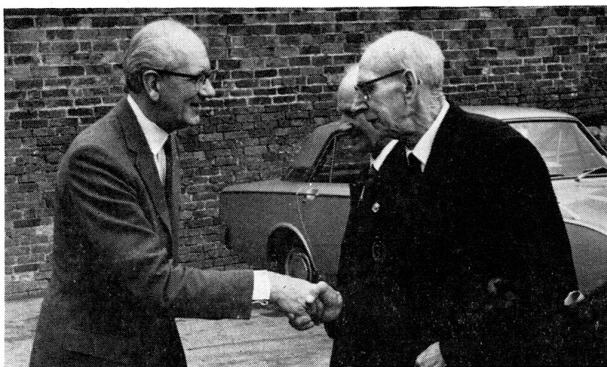
ON Monday, June 23rd, some 240 superannuated members and guests assembled at various points on the Company's area and were conveyed by coaches to Hartlebury Castle, near Kidderminster. On arrival they were welcomed by Sir Charles Burman, Chairman of the Directors, and by senior officers of the Company; after which, amidst hearty handshakes and re-unions, the party meandered through the Worcester County Museum, housed in and around the Castle, depicting agricultural, industrial, domestic and social life in the 19th Century. As they re-assembled the



stewardesses distributed refreshing ice-cream before the party moved off for a drive through the pleasant Worcestershire countryside via Bewdley and the Cleve Hills en route for Tenbury Wells.

On arrival at the Swan Hotel, guests were accommodated at one sitting in the dining room and ballroom for tea, over which stories continued to be re-told and past glories re-lived. Mr. Lamont, Engineer-in-Chief, took this opportunity to welcome the members present and update them with brief details of things to come.

On the road again, the party continued to Stourport via the Teme Valley. There they boarded three boats for a trip on the river and samples from the saloon bar. Tribute at this stage must



be paid to the stewards and stewardesses for the marathon task they performed in this thirst-quenching operation. Back at the landing stage, farewells were said before everyone joined the coaches for the homeward journey, tired, but with memories of a happy day.

In conclusion, for the records, the senior pensioner on parade was Mr. J. Simpkins, of Lichfield—a youth of some 86 years and a pensioner for 21 years.

The total age of the pensioners was 8,575 years, giving an average age of 70 years. Their total service is 3,887 years, giving an average service of 32 years.

STAN WIMBUSH.

## RETIREMENT OF RANDAL HENDERSON TAYLOR

THE Company's Engineer-in-Chief retired on the 31st March after nearly 34 years' service.

Randal Henderson Taylor came down from the Victoria University, Manchester, in 1928 with a First-Class Honours Degree in Civil Engineering and took up an appointment with Barnsley Corporation Waterworks where, during the next seven years, he obtained considerable experience in the design and construction of impounding reservoirs at the Royd Moor and Scout Dyke water supply schemes. After a further two years as Senior Assistant to the distinguished firm of consulting engineers, Messrs. Rofe and Raffety, of Westminster, he joined the Company's staff in October, 1937.

The Company's average daily consumption at that time was about 24 m.g. and this had increased to nearly 66 m.g. before his retirement. This increase in consumption required a continuous new works programme and in addition to being concerned in the development of numerous borehole stations Mr. Taylor took a very active part in the development of the River Blithe Scheme. Later he was directly responsible for the River Severn Scheme for the joint use of the Company and the Wolverhampton Corporation. An essential part of the Severn Scheme was the Clywedog Reservoir, near Llanidloes in North Wales, and as Chairman of the Technical Subcommittee of the Clywedog Reservoir Authority he took a most active part in its development.

Side by side with these activities he was concerned with the electrification of no fewer than 12 steam stations and after being promoted Deputy Engineer-in-Chief in 1944 he became increasingly concerned in the operation and administration of the undertaking. He assumed full responsibility for these functions on being appointed Engineer-in-Chief in 1960 and during the next decade there followed a number of investigations which lead to significant operational and administrative improvements being made.

Mr. Taylor took an active interest in the staff and employees of the Company at all times and it was characteristic of him to be sympathetic in

cases of illness and hardship. A past Chairman of the Staff Association, he was President of the Benevolent Fund at the time of his retirement.

Mr. Taylor has given his services to the waterworks industry in numerous capacities. He was a member of the Central Advisory Water Committee, the Executive Committees of the British Waterways Association and the Water Companies Association, a Council Member of the Institution of Water Engineers and a member of the Institution of Civil Engineers Committee under the Reservoirs (Safety Provisions) Act, 1930. In addition he remains a member of the Trent River Authority on which he has served since its formation in 1964.

Randal Henderson Taylor, an engineer of exceptional ability and high professional standing, may feel justly proud of his record with the Company. He has occupied the position of Engineer-in-Chief in all its aspects with dignity and great distinction, thereby enhancing the high standing of the Company throughout the waterworks industry.

From the numerous sincere tributes paid to him on the occasion of his retirement, Mr. Taylor will know that the good wishes of the staff and employees of the Company go with him.

JAMES LAMONT.

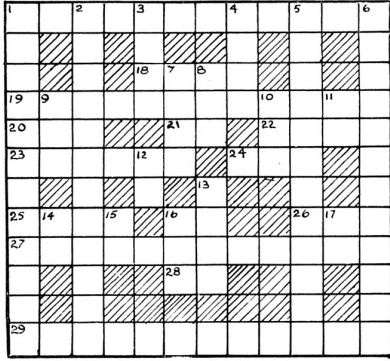
## EDITORIAL

My chief task in editing this issue of the News Review has been to juggle around and cut down in size the splendid number of articles that I have received so that I could get as many as possible in.

The content is a bit on the serious side at the moment, but it is difficult to get humorous articles or cartoons. I know it's not easy to write an amusing story without making it sound silly, but please see what you can do.

Finally, may I say a big thank-you to those who have already sent contributions and offer encouragement to those who are still thinking about it.

BRONWYN THURSTON,  
Acting Editor.



**CLUES DOWN**

1. A department with this would be neither efficient nor unbiased. (7, 5)
2. Musically without memorial. (6, 6)
3. You can have on free on the Company. (4)
4. Gins may make you do this. (4)
5. Aspirin may do this temporarily. (3, 5, 4)
6. One would hardly wear this for this. (7, 5)
7. These help. (4)
8. Found in ten down. (3)
9. Ancient propellor. (4)
10. Wartime soldiers, and every one a lady. (3)
11. Not off. (2)
12. Royal abbreviation. (2)
13. The participants in 29 across would hope their lines were always this. (4)
14. There are three ways of spelling this. (2)
15. Short gymnastics. (2)
16. The French have a word for it. (3)
17. Neuter pronoun. (2)

**CLUES ACROSS**

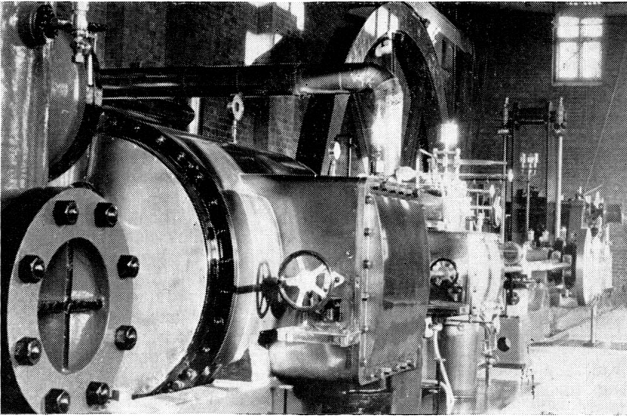
1. Quietly lumbers the team around to find an assistant. (8, 4)
16. Qualified to be a little mother. (2)
18. The poet's taken short. (4)
19. Would a coalman on a motor-bike be doing this? (8, 1, 3)
20. This Scot would look huge in A.G.T. (3)
21. A degree not required in this engineering department. (2)
22. Years ago we were being asked which twin had this. (4)
23. The way he quibbles makes us rage. (6)
24. By definition, none of two down got this. (3)
25. Part of a salary grade. (4)
26. Not hers. (3)
27. Ah, trout to sup, after a difficult route. (8, 4)
28. All water and no beer. (2)
29. The angling club might arrange this by re-arranging six down. (7, 5)

A £2 prize will be given to the sender of the first correct solution received by the Editor before 30th September, 1971. The Editor's decision will be final. All entries must bear the name and office or home address of the sender.

## A VISIT TO BRINDLEY BANK

SET back down a sweeping gravel drive, off the Wolsley Road, Brindley Bank pumping station looks like someone's ancestral home.

The ancestor, a rotative, horizontal compound, side valve, engine, built by Hathorn Davey and installed in 1905, dominates the great hall, where it lies majestically like some giant dinosaur. Its present-day relatives, two small electric pumps, occupy only a corner of the residence.



Silent and forever still, the steam engine is polished and painted to perfection and lovingly maintained by its one-time master, Cyril Bradbury, the foreman at Brindley Bank since 1948.

Cyril had worked with steam engines since he joined the Company in 1928, but when economy and progress caught up with Brindley Bank and it was electrified in 1968, he had to learn a new way of life.

Cyril is now quite a dab hand with electric motors, but in the days of the change his sanity was preserved only by the encouragement of his family and his interest in outdoor things.

In the station grounds he keeps the lawns neatly mown and the flower beds colourfully stocked. His own garden is backed by an enormous natural rockery, but its chief glory is a very productive vegetable garden.

The battle for space and light in the greenhouse has at present been won by some very healthy looking tomato plants and a succulent grape vine. Growing happily, but less obviously, amongst these are some rather rarer plants.

Jutting stiffly out from a piece of damp bark is a stags

head fern, which looks just like a hunter's trophy. Another very curious occupant is the hoyacarnosa, a trailing plant, which has hanging clusters of small pink flowers which appear to be made of wax or plastic and yet have an almost animal-like quality in that they exude beads of moisture, like tears.

At the moment Cyril also has four beehives and quite a collection of birds to cope with. The biggest and brightest of the birds is Peter the peacock, who has made staunch friends with the Sussex bantam hens.

Housed nearby are 30 unusual looking pigeons, known as Birmingham Rollers, they have a pink/brown plumage. Another spacious cage contains a cosmopolitan crowd of gay little birds, including Zebra finches from Africa, which make a noise very similar to a baby's squeaky toy; green singing finches also from Africa, saffron finches from South America, goldfinches from Britain, siskins from Norway and budgerigars from Australia.

Piously watching over the whole scene are several pairs of nun pigeons. These birds are dressed in white, with black caps, hence the name.

So, though Cyril now works alone at Brindley Bank, he has

## RAMBLE . . .

We rambled, yet again, this year, Bringing out our walking gear. Also bringing out the sun, Thus Sugg's luck ne'er breaks its run. The biggest crowd, without exception, The list too long, this year, to mention; 'Nuff' to say a goodly few, At 'Tall Trees' at half-past two. Soon the arm of R. J. Wright Points the path (though not quite right) For the one we follow first, Leads to brambles (how we cursed); Turn about and cross the stile, Down the hill for our first mile. Through a farmyard (mind the mud) Cows look up from chewing cud, Farmyard dogs, who growl and fight Bob Wright's toe, soon, puts to flight. Onward! to a leafy lane, "How's your feet?" "I feel no pain." Bluebells growing on the banks, Locals think "they must be cranks." Stepping out to "Sugg knows where," Little time to stand and stare. Soon into a meadow green, Dora Lees with "pop" is seen, She, with Mrs. Sugg, to-day De-hydration keeps at bay.

Off again along a stream, Over bridge into a dream, Of landscape garden, so well laid Beside a mill which needles made, Can this really be the path? Cheerful owner, void of wrath, Waving hands is heard to say "Walkers welcome! come this way." Soon upon the road again; Leafy hedgerow, narrow lane, Leads us to a meadow track,, Now the pace begins to slack. Stragglers catch up at a gate Fixed with wire so leaders wait. "Must we lift the ladies high?" Flexing muscles, hear men sigh; Sugg decides this cannot be (Hercules was not like he) So he twists the wire and twine, Gate creaks open, thus the line, Plods or trots, whilst dogs do run Back to 'Tall Trees' in the sun. What a feast awaits us there (Welcome, too, the easy chair) In fresh brewed tea, all drinking toasts, To our hard-worked generous hosts. For that very splendid meal Gave our day, the perfect seal; Also thanks to Sugg and Co. Who Astwood Bank, to us, did show.

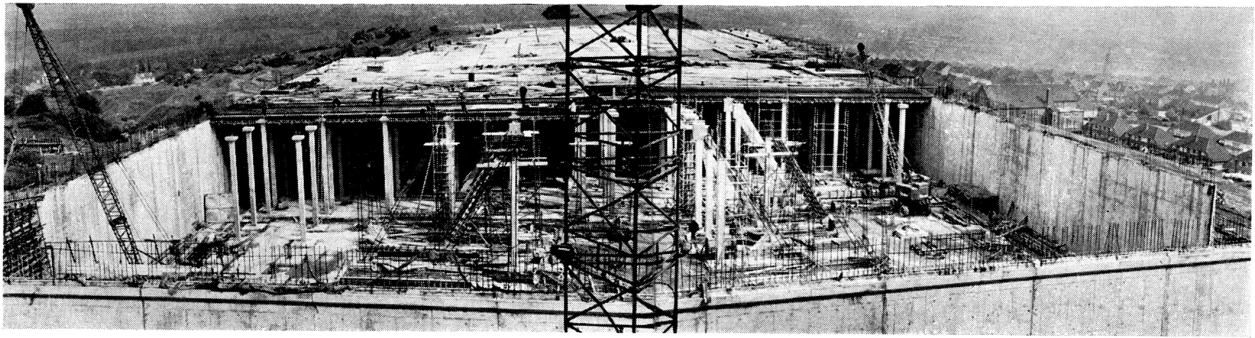
DAVID PARSONS.



plenty to keep him occupied. In the days of the dinosaur, there were ten men working for him, but his last assistant, Tom Griffiths, who had been sharing

his time, since 1968, between there and Blithfield, retired on the 21st June after 25 years with the Company.

BRONWYN THURSTON.



A view of Sedgley Beacon Reservoir under construction.

## A description of the work in progress at Sedgley Beacon

WORK is now nearing completion at Sedgley Beacon, where a 15-million-gallon service reservoir is under construction for the use of the Company and Wolverhampton Corporation. This will be the terminal reservoir for the River Severn Scheme; water being pumped to this point through 12 miles of 45in. diameter main from Hampton Loade Treatment Works.

The works being carried out on the Beacon at the present time form the latest in a succession of engineering works going back for many centuries. It has been suggested that the Beacon was used by the Ancient Britons as a look-out post, and served also, as a signalling station for the quarterly religious rites which took place at Barr Beacon and Sutton Coldfield, both places being centres of Druid worship. The Beacon Tower which exists to this day was built in 1846 by Lord Wrottesley, for astronomical observations. The first use of the Beacon for water supply purposes came in 1894 when the existing reservoir was constructed, followed in 1923 by the construction of the elevated steel tanks which originated from an Army Camp on Cannock Chase.

Work on site for the present project started in November, 1969, when a fleet of six tractor scrapers, each capable of moving some 25 cubic yards of material, moved on to the site. The first few months were occupied in removing the top of Sedgley Beacon down to a depth of some 25 feet below original ground level, until a level area was formed on which the reservoir was to be constructed. A total of some 80,000 cubic yards of material, mostly rock, was excavated, and sufficient stored in a vast stock pile at one end of the Beacon to be re-used on completion of construction to form embankments. The surplus, some 20,000 cubic yards, was transported from the site, this work alone keeping five lorries occupied for five months.

In April, 1970, the first concrete was poured in the wall foundations and was followed by the pouring of the wall panels, each 20 feet long by 26 feet high and requiring 40 cubic yards of concrete. Then followed construction of column bases and columns and finally erection of steel beams from which the roof shutters were supported, and construction of the roof slab.

Concurrently with the reservoir construction, approximately 850 yards of 45in. and 36in. diameter mains forming the reservoir were laid together with inlet and outlet mains to the construction of an underground cross connection chamber on the western side of the Beacon slopes. In addition a Booster Station which is nearing completion, is being constructed on the eastern slopes of the Beacon to serve the higher parts of Sedgley and Dudley and this will enable the existing elevated tanks to be demolished.

The five-million-gallon first compartment of the reservoir which will be used by Wolverhampton, was tested and put into supply on 21st May, 1971, just 18 months after work started on site, and the 10-million-gallon compartment is likely to be commissioned during September of this year, less than two years after construction started.

On completion embankments will be formed which will completely surround and cover the reservoirs when the only evidence of their existence will be a small chamber on each side of the Beacon giving access to valve chambers and the reservoir. The whole of the site will then be handed back to the public as an open space and will provide an ideal playground for the local children, the reservoir roof alone occupying the space of two football pitches.

MICHAEL UPSTONE.

## DEATHS

**Mr. R. Evans**, who was a Waste Inspector at Tipton, died on 26th April, 1971.

**Mrs. K. M. Cherrett**, widow of a former Superintendent of Cannock, died on 16th May, 1971.

**Mr. S. E. W. Buller**, who was a painter at Walsall, died on 20th May, 1971.

**Mr. E. F. Bannister**, who was a Main Jointer at Walsall, died on 6th June, 1971.

Sympathy is extended to all relatives.

## BIG BUSINESS

THERE are 338 contributing members of the Thrift Fund and they have deposits amounting to over £163,000. These were just two of the figures quoted in the Annual Report and Accounts which were considered at the 44th Annual General Meeting of the Fund held at Walsall on 24th June when the members were able to authorise a tax-free interest rate of 5% for the year ended 31st March, 1971.

At the meeting it was also reported that over £27,000 had been deposited during the year and over £17,000 had been advanced to more than 100 employees in short-term loans.

All employees are eligible to become contributing members and deposits may be made both by regular saving from pay packets and by lump sums.

Loans are repayable by regular deductions from pay packets.

If you would like to know more about the Fund or use its services, please contact any of the Committee whose names are shown below:

G. W. Anderson, E. B. Bailey, E. Jones, J. W. Keeling, C. T. Langdon, H. Brookes, A. Spink, R. G. Clarke, J. Dixon, P. D. Johnson, I. E. Wallis, A. C. Bateman. Hon. Secretary, P. F. Thomas; Hon. Treasurer, E. Burgess.

Mr. A. W. Tibbenham is Chairman of this Committee.

## A Friend in Need

Approximately 60 members attended the Annual General Meeting of the S.S.W.W. Benevolent Fund held at the Belle Vue Hotel, Walsall, on the 25th June.

In pleasant contrast to the impersonal age we live in, these meetings continue to retain an air of friendliness and informality.

After the election of Mr. J. Lamont as President in succession to Mr. R. H. Taylor, the proceedings took their normal course. Mr. A. E. Reed, the epitome of benevolence, described the year's operations and Mr. J. Whitworth highlighted points on the balance sheet. The financial position was healthy and, following the enlarged subscription, payments to members in need had greatly increased.

Election of the Committee of Management involved the re-election of the Chairman, Mr. S. L. Morrall, the Secretary, Mr. A. E. Reed, the Hon. Assistant Treasurer, Mr. A. E. Newwort, and the Hon. Assistant Secretary, Mr. E. Glasse.

Mr. P. D. Johnson was elected as Vice Chairman in place of Mr. A. Hollowood who, unhappily, had to resign due to illness.

A retirement presentation was made to Mr. J. Whitworth, who was succeeded as Hon. Treasurer by Mr. E. Burgess.

The former Vice-Presidents were re-elected en-bloc, which was scarcely deserved in view of the parsimonious financial support they jointly give to the fund. Mr. M. Upstone (Construction Engineer) and Mr. E. Gadsby (Deputy Distribution Engineer) were added to their ranks.

Mr. Lamont in a short speech referred to the changes in management following the retirement of Mr. Taylor and other general matters, capping his remarks with a story entirely unconnected with our work and probably unfit for the Editor's eyes.

Beer, pork pie, pickled onions and sandwiches concluded a happy evening.

W.A.M.

P.F.T. **Editor's footnote:** Spoilsport!

## HEAD OFFICE FOOTBALL TEAM REPORT

SUCCESS doesn't come easy we found. Our promising form up to the season's half-way mark soon dwindled, with the onset of bad weather and injuries, and the end saw us propping up the lower half of the 3rd division of the Bloxwich Combination.

In the Walsall Observer Cup we progressed as far as the semi-final, only to be eliminated by Manor House, whose rather basic talents were better suited to the gale force winds and torrential rain prevailing at the time!

We should not make too many excuses though. If it hadn't been for some silly mistakes on our part, we could quite easily have had two trophies in the canteen by now. Next season, however, we shall be there again and with increased determination and a year's experience behind us. We are hopeful of great things.

On the financial side, the club couldn't be more healthy and

we should like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their continued participation in the tote. Our books will be audited in the near future and a statement of account will be displayed on the notice board in the basement of Birmingham Office. If anyone has any comments, they will have an opportunity to express them at our A.G.M., which will be held in early September.

One disappointment, however, was the lack of support which led to the cancellation of our proposed discotheque. The purpose of these dances was not solely one of raising money, but also an attempt to provide entertainment for the younger employees of the Company.

Finally, we would like publicly to thank the President, Mr. I. E. Wallis, for the invaluable help and support which he has given us throughout the year.

JOHN EARLE.

## Passing of old friends at Cannock

GONE! Yet another of the Company's buildings of yesterday has been swept from the face of the earth. It was a notable landmark set in the heart of Cannock Chase.

I refer to the tall Victorian-looking engine house at Moors Gorse pumping station, which for 75 years housed steam-driven beam engines, which gallantly pumped our water until the advance of electricity.

In place of the old engine house, a much smaller building, of somewhat different character, has been erected. Together with the newly-landscaped grounds, this, perhaps, is more in keeping with the local surroundings of the Chase.

It is a little difficult to realise that although the new pumping station and the machinery it houses is much smaller than the old, its efficiency is much greater.

The writer remembers the Moors Gorse of some 40 years ago with nostalgia. The Moors Gorse was synonymous with the name of Dave Bates, who was for many years the Station Foreman.

He coveted his charge with such great pride and care that one might have been forgiven for thinking he had a part share in it.

Dave's attitude to "his" pumping station prompts me to relate a little incident that occurred during the early part of the war years, when the writer, formidably armed with nick handle, was doing Home Guard duty at the station.

One summer evening, towards dusk, the familiar sound of an

air-raid warning was followed by the heavy drone of a large number of approaching enemy aircraft. Almost simultaneous was the appearance of Dave, running down the drive from his cottage, fastening his uniform in readiness to take charge of operations to repel any would-be invaders.

His first instruction, as he reached the full complement of four, by this time gathered near the main gates, was, "Doa talk so loud, chaps, 'case they hears yer. Hitler's after this bloody place yer know. It's one of 'is top priorities." Talk about "Dad's Army"!

Gone, too, Dennis Penaluna, one time draughtsman at Cannock Area Office, who, together with his wife Christine, has emigrated to Cape Town, South Africa. Dennis has obtained an appointment with the Cape Town Municipal Water Department, whilst his wife is on the hospital staff of Dr. Christian Barnard, the heart surgeon. We wish them both well.

"AQUA MILL."

## Retirements

Thank you and all good wishes to—

**Mr. J. T. Griffiths**, Labourer at Brindley Bank and Blithfield, who retired on 21st June, 1971.

**Mr. A. E. Paris**, Ganger at Sutton, who retired on 30th June, 1971.

**Mr. J. W. Whitworth**, Registrar in the Secretary's Department, who retired on 30th June, 1971.

## LETTER FROM S. AFRICA

Dear Mr. Langston and Company!

We arrived in Johannesburg, Jan Smutts Airport, on Sunday, 18th April, at 9-30 a.m. (7-30 a.m. your time). The sun was burning down.

After looking around Jo'burgh and Pretoria, the seat of the Administrative Parliament, we left on the 20th for Cape Town. It was a fantastic journey, taking 29 hours on the fast train.

We came at first to the Bantu Townships. You should see them! No mud huts or shanty town here. These are detached houses—thousands of them. The Bantu people pay for them at R2 (£1.00) per month, until they own them. They also have their own cars.

After the Townships we came to the Great Karoo, a vast stretch of land that goes on for 700 miles. It is flat and covered with bush.

We had, of course, to take meals on the train—a five-course lunch, of a very high standard, cost 60 cents (30p).

We awoke on the second morning to a fantastic sight. We were in mountain country. Huge, vast, stark, brutal rock, towering above and below us and as far as the eye could see.

To come down to sea level at Cape Town, we had to pass through the Iks (pronounced Ex) River Valley and the Valley of a Thousand Hills—one can only look in awe.

So we arrived in Cape Town—and what a place! Four-lane highways (each side) go through the city; but the drivers are mad, quite mad!

We have expected to see lions, tigers, elephants and snakes roaming the streets but we soon got to know that they are nicely confined to the National Parks. Christine thought she saw a lion last week, but it was merely a dog of uncertain pedigree. The nearest we have come to wild life yet, was a couple of weeks ago when I found a little lizard on one of the veins of a Venetian blind.

The beer here is of the lager type and would sell at 9p a pint. Scotch is 7½p a tot. A good bottle of wine costs from 10p to 15p; the best wine about 20p to 50p. Steak costs about 20p to 25p a lb. One can have an excellent meal out, for four people, costing between £1.50 and £2.00. An average salary is approx. £150 per month for a white, £100 per month for a coloured, and £75 per month for a Bantu.

Hope to hear from one of you soon.

DENNIS AND CHRISTINE  
PENALUNA.

## Waterworks in the blood

NINETY-FIVE years of unbroken family service with the Company came to an end with the retirement of Jack Whitworth on 30th June, 1971.



Mr. Jack Whitworth

This long association began with Jack's great-uncle, who was a rate collector at Tipton from 1876 until 1926, and continued with Jack's father, who was employed by the Secretary from 1890 till his death in 1916.

Jack himself joined the Secretary's department in October, 1923, having left his previous employer because there was no prospect of an electrical engineering apprenticeship!

In addition to his official duties, Jack has been an active committee member of the Staff Association, Superannuation, Benevolent and Thrift Funds.

In 1939 he joined the A.F.S. as a volunteer, eventually being promoted to Assistant Divisional Officer. He remained on part-time operational service until 1967, when the age limit forced him to retire, but is still active with the Fire Service Benevolent Fund. His services were recognised by the award of the B.E.M. in 1953.

Jack relaxes by indulging in his favourite sport, Fly Fishing. He also maintains an interest in radio and electronics. There are many people in the Company who have had "unrepairable" transistor sets put in order by the budding electrical engineer who put down his tools in favour of the pen some 47 years ago.

Until 1969 Jack was justly proud of his attendance record, having only had 5½ days absent in 45 years. However in December, 1969, he had his appendix removed and in September, 1970, suffered a severe thrombosis from which he has made a remarkable recovery.

His colleagues, in wishing both Jack and his wife a long and happy retirement, made him a presentation of a camera and equipment.

GEOFFREY CLARKE.