



NEWS REVIEW

THE SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE WATERWORKS COMPANY NEWS SHEET

Re-organisation of the Water Industry

The Government is pressing forward rapidly with its Bill for re-organising water services. The Bill was introduced in the House of Commons on the 23rd January and given a second reading on the 5th February. It has now gone for consideration by a Standing Committee of the House, meeting twice weekly. Subject to amendment, in passage through Parliament, the Bill is expected to become law by July.

The principal provisions of the proposed legislation are as follows:—

National Policy: Formulation of a national policy on water will be the responsibility of the Secretary of State for the Environment and the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

National Water Council: The National Water Council, consisting of a Chairman, the chairmen of regional water authorities and not more than 10 other members, will be established to promote and assist the efficient performance by water authorities, of their duties and to ensure the provision of adequate negotiating machinery and training facilities.

Regional Water Authorities: England has been divided into nine geographic areas, within each of which the supply of water, conservation and proper use of water resources, collection and disposal of sewage, land drainage and water recreation will be the responsibility of a regional water authority. These authorities will be established by August, 1973, and will take over their duties by April, 1974.

The Company's area of supply comes within the boundaries of the Severn/Trent R.W.A. The Authority will consist of 38 members, the majority being appointed by local authorities and the remainder by the two Ministers.

Water Companies: The statutory obligation of water companies to supply water will cease on 1st April, 1974, but by 1st November, 1973, the Company will receive from the Severn/Trent Authority a draft of the arrangements by which, after agreement, it will continue to operate as the Authority's agent.

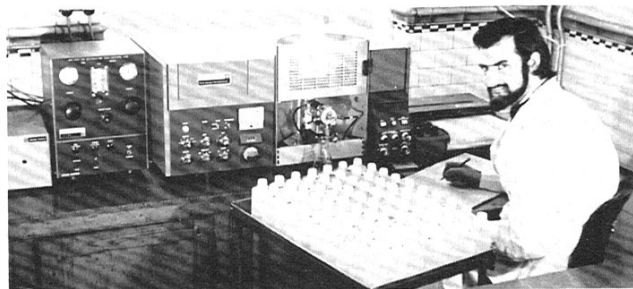
The Government proposes to set up a Staff Commission to handle the recruitment and transfer of employees and to safeguard the interests of those affected by the re-organisation.

Representations have been made by the Company that its employees should have equal opportunity with other people in the industry to apply for the new jobs, and arrangements are being made to ensure that pension benefits will be transferable.

THE EDITOR.

The Robot lab Technician

Modernisation is in progress at the Company's main Laboratory at Sandfields. Use is being made of modern instrumentation methods, which are efficient and lead to a considerable saving of time. The latest equipment acquired is a Perkin-Elmer Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer. This modern and sophisticated instrument was purchased in June 1972 and was only the second such instrument to be commissioned in this country.



The apparatus is used for the speedy measurement of traces of metals dissolved in water. The sample is drawn into an atomising chamber, where minute droplets are formed. These are vapourised in an air/acetylene flame. Under these conditions, atoms are formed which are able to absorb ultra-violet or visible light. The wavelengths of light which atoms can absorb fall within a very narrow band. The band of wavelengths is different for each element. By selecting a light source of known specific wavelength it is possible to determine one element in the presence of many others. For example, if iron is to be determined, a lamp which emits light of the correct wavelength for iron atoms is used. The light passes through the atomised sample and some of it is absorbed, the remainder passes through and is measured. The amount of metal in the sample appears as digits on a screen. Solutions of dissolved metal salts, the strength of which is accurately known, are used for regular standardisation and setting up of the instrument.

At the present time, iron, manganese, zinc, copper and lead are being routinely determined. Development is proceeding for the determination of calcium and magnesium which provides an alternative to the older methods of determination of water hardness. Facilities are also available for determining other metals such as cadmium, barium, chromium, nickel and cobalt. Some of these metals are associated with trade wastes, which can find their way into river waters.

Time saved with this instrument should enable extension of analytical work into the complex field of trace quantities of organic substances in water, and further research activities.

NO SPENDING SPREE IN '73

There must be as many different ideas on how to deal with inflation as there are days in the week, but one thing on which we shall all agree is that something must be done.

Traditionally in the Company we all try to find better ways to do our jobs. This year, however, the emphasis has got to be on how to do them more economically.

To help in this work an Ad Hoc committee has been set up consisting of Peter Hopes and Edwin Lee (Administration), Dave Burgess (Distribution), Alan Jones (E/MD) and Ian McPherson (CED). They are given specific tasks aimed at locating areas of expense where further quickly realisable economies can be achieved. Incidentally, as part of their contribution, they are required to carry out these tasks in addition to their normal work-loads!

So far the Committee has looked at three problems:—

- (i) Telephone charges, which cost £19,000 in 1972. We shall have seen the results of their efforts by the time this article gets into print.

- (ii) Authorisation of purchase orders. This is being tightened up wherever possible.

- (ii) Transport utilisation and related costs. This is in progress.

In Distribution Department spontaneous reaction has already come from Area Superintendents Ted Jones and Fred Langston, who have made a variety of suggestions which have been developed through their Consultative Committee machinery and all these are being actively pursued.

But more can be done, and must be done, if we are to keep costs down in 1973. Section Leaders in Engineering Departments now have detailed cost breakdowns for their Sections, and it is hoped that these will enable them to make constructive suggestions, as well as assert more stringent cost control.

But it is not only section leaders who can make a contribution. Everyone knows his own job best, and, therefore, can suggest where savings can be made. Please have a go. If you have a constructive idea, contact your Head of Department or Area Superintendent, or better still use the suggestion scheme (the awards are about to be reviewed!)

SEEING THE SITES

NEW RESERVOIR AT GLASCOTE

The demand for water in the Tamworth area is expected to rise considerably over the next few years, as a result of the Tamworth development plan, which aims at the construction of 13,000 houses, in addition to industrial development, by 1980. Much of this development is currently in progress and some is already complete. The West Midlands Study has indicated that further development may take place after 1980.

In order to meet this increasing demand, the Company is to carry out new works in the area. A major part of which will involve the construction of a new, 18 megalitre capacity, service reservoir, on a site adjacent to the existing reservoir at Glascote, near Tamworth. A new booster station, replacing the booster at present in use on the site, will be incorporated in the reservoir structure.

As a first step in the design work a site investigation was carried out for the Company, early in 1972, by Cementation Ground Engineering Ltd. This involved drilling eleven boreholes to determine the type and properties of the materials on which the reservoir would be founded. Since the site is in a former coal-mining area, one of the bores was taken down to a depth of 45 metres to ensure that there were no shallow mine workings which might affect the structure.

The new reservoir, which will be a covered, reinforced concrete structure, is being designed in the Civil Engineering Department. Design calculations for part of the structure have been carried out by computer. In view of the Company's change of the metric system in January, 1973, measurements are in metric units. The area of the reservoir will be 64 by 50 metres and the water depth will be 6 metres. The reinforced concrete roof will be supported by 128 circular reinforced concrete columns.

During the Summer of 1972, contractors for Tamworth Borough Council were carrying out work on the adjacent Amington Industrial Estate and arrangements were made for them to carry out preliminary drainage and roadworks in connection with the new reservoir, on the Company's behalf.

As has been done recently with Sedgley reservoirs, the site will be handed over to the Local Authority, on completion of the project, as a public open space. Careful attention is, therefore, being given to landscaping. The access and ventilation to the reservoir, together with the inlet and outlet pipework, will be incorporated within the new booster house. This removes the need for manholes in the reservoir roof, always a potential invitation for vandalism on an open area site.

Since demand for water will increase if further development takes place in the area, the layout of the site has been designed to allow for the construction of two more reservoirs, as and when required.

RICHARD D. FOSTER

All Saints to Birmingham Road, West Bromwich

Work commenced in September, 1972, on laying the 800mm dia. main from West Bromwich booster to Sandwell Arch, on the A41 Birmingham Road. This is the first "metric" bitumen sheathed, concrete lined, ductile iron main to be laid in the Company's area.

The work is being carried out by Whittaker Ellis Ltd., who have laid several mains for the Company. Although only 3,500m long, the main incorporates three 1,200mm dia. thrust bores; under the Newton Road, the M5 Motorway and across to the island over the motorway at Sandwell Arch. The main also crosses Dartmouth and Sandwell golf courses and negotiates the football pitches in Sandwell Park.

When complete, the main will enable River Severn water to be distributed to the West Bromwich and Smethwick area, so improving the security of future supplies. It will connect the 460mm (18") dia. main in Birmingham Road to West Bromwich booster, which will be linked in the future to Barr Beacon reservoir.

The resident engineer on the site is Bev Sim, assisted by John Bird and Frank Duffield, and directed from Head Office by Paul Symons.

DAVID BURGESS.



690mm (27") dia. steel pipe being floated into position across the River Trent at Burton.

Bond End to Saxon Street, Burton

Like a Loch Ness monster, the 690mm (27") dia. steel pipe was floated across the River Trent to be laid under the river bed at Burton, on the 6th October, 1972. Prior to launching, the pipe had been fabricated in sections on the river bank and surrounded with concrete. After the concrete had cured, the pipe was lowered into the river, where pontoons were placed on either side for floating it into position across the river. A trench had been excavated in the river bed so that the top of the pipe is 1m (39") below the bed to allow for future dredging works. The pipe was laid by Terraqua Ltd., a firm which specialises in underwater pipelines.

The pipe crossing is part of the 450mm dia. main being laid from Bond End to Saxon Street, Burton, for transferring water from Outwoods zone to Winhill zone, to cater for the increase in demand in the Winhill area. It will connect the 560mm (22") dia. main in the A38 to the 460mm (18") dia. suction main to Saxon Street booster. A 690mm (27") dia. pipe was laid across the river to cater for a future duplication of the 450mm dia. main.

The 450mm dia. main is being laid by direct labour; Bert Langston and his gang, assisted by men from Burton Area Office. Brian Bayliss is acting as resident engineer, assisted by Jack Joyce.

Kettlebrook to Glascote, Tamworth

The 500mm dia. ductile iron main being laid in Tamworth is the second phase of the main between Hopwas and Glascote reservoirs and represents a further stage in the augmentation of supplies to the Tamworth new town development area.

The main is being laid by Norwest Construction Co. Ltd., who laid the 530mm (21") dia. main from Seedy Mill to Burton in 1969. As well as passing through a sewage works and Kettlebrook Park, the main lies under the Birmingham-Derby railway in a 1060mm dia. thrust bore and crosses the B5000 at Glascote.

Work on the site is being supervised by the resident engineer, Colin Turner, assisted by Terry Tapper, Ronny Groom and Tony Prendergast.

Births

CONGRATULATIONS TO Ken and Shirley Twigg and proud Grandpa, Arthur, on the birth of Caroline Jane, 22nd September, 1972.

ALSO TO

Josie and David Carpenter on the birth of Andrew David, 14th October, 1972.

AND

Wendy and Trevor Roe on the birth of Amanda, 2nd November, 1972.

Long Service Awards October—March

44 Years

Mr. C. H. Bradbury, Foreman at Brindley Bank

41 Years

Mr. A. E. Young, Assistant at Walsall Control Office.

25 Years

Mr. R. J. Chambers, Foreman at Slitting Mill.

Mr. A. N. Cooper, Area Maintenance Supervisor.

Mr. A. S. Noakes, Chief Storekeeper at Wood Green.

Mr. G. A. Royall, Assistant in the Revenue Dept.

Mr. D. Tilley, Motor Driver at Tipton.

Retirements

Mr. W. T. Goodhead, District Inspector at Burton, retired on 20th October, 1972.

Mr. G. I. Temple, Drawing Office Supervisor, retired on 30th November, 1972.

Mr. F. J. Hovers, Painter at Wednesbury, retired on 19th December, 1972.

Mr. S. Bennett, Attendant at Pipe Hill, retired on 23rd December, 1972.

Mr. C. H. Bradbury, Foreman at Brindley Bank, retired on 27th December, 1972.

Mr. G. W. Anderson, Superintendent of Water Treatment at Sandfields, retired on 12th January, 1973.

Mr. A. E. Young, Control Office Assistant at Walsall, retired on 1st March, 1973.

Mr. F. E. Evans, Trenchman at Walsall, retired on 17th March, 1973.

Mr. R. W. Taylor, Clerk at Birmingham, retired on 30th March, 1973.

Deaths

Mr. A. E. Cartmale, Filter Operator at Sandfields, died on 25th November, 1972.

Mr. W. H. Wilcox, Former Foreman at Wood Green, died on 9th December, 1972.

Mr. W. J. Hemmings, Carpenter at Wednesbury, died on 25th December, 1972.

Mr. A. Tunnicliffe, Attendant at Chilcote, died on 27th January, 1973.

Mr. G. Walklate, Former Waste Inspector at Cannock, died on 25th February, 1973.

An icemaker thaws to the water industry

On 31st January, George Anderson retired from the water treatment section after 26 years, first as assistant and later as superintendent.

George, who once worked in an ice factory, in his home town of Scarborough, began his experience with water treatment whilst working for Patterson Engineering Co. He installed treatment plants throughout the country, including those at Chilcote and Seedy Mill.

George's links with the Company will not be completely severed, as he is now working, on a part-time basis, with the Secretary's department.

Plan chests swapped for a woodworker's tool box

After 22 years in distribution department, responsible initially, as an engineering assistant, for many trunk mains programmes, and later for the efficient running of the drawing office, George Temple retired on 30th November.

He was presented with a woodworker's chest and tools by his distribution colleagues and a cheque from the Staff Association.

All his friends remember George with deep affection and wish him every happiness in retirement, hoping that his activities will allow him to visit them at Head Office.

It's Blithfield for the Bradburys

With hectic memories of 44 years of caring for the steam engines at Maple Brook and Brindley Bank, as well as raising two sons of their own, Cyril and Mary are now embarking on a more leisurely episode of life, in retirement together, in the beautiful surroundings of Blithfield.

Walsall socialites

Support for the Social Club's Christmas functions was so great that arrangements have been made for future events to be held at the Bentley Moor Club, which has large modern premises, with a bar, stage and other facilities.

The next Free and Easy will be held there in April, also on the calendar is the annual Break Trip, planned for May.

The club presented a nest of tables and an electric iron to mark Alf Young's retirement on 1st March, after 35 years in the Control Office. What with the ironing and painting and decorating for his large, married family, Alf will not have much time for relaxation.

Also retiring, on 16th March, is Edgar Evans after 21 years as a trenchman. Edgar's looking forward to gardening and fishing, when he feels like it.

CHANGES AT CRUMPWOOD

Crumpwood, a delightful and normally peaceful spot set in the Churnet Valley, just north of Denstone and comprising part of the Alton Estate, renowned for its Alton Towers, has been the scene of some unusual activity since July of last year.

It was then that work commenced on the laying of twin 12" dia. mains between the proposed new pumping station and the existing 7" and 9" dia. mains through which water is pumped from the present pumping stations into Prestwood reservoir, from where it gravitates into Bramshall reservoir, supplying the villages of Denstone, Rocester, Bramshall and part of Uttoxeter itself en route.

Before actual mainlaying could be started it was first necessary to infill a section of an old disused canal lock.

This proved to be rather a major obstacle, as the canal acts as a collecting chamber for the surrounding surface water and in turn empties into the nearby River Churnet.

It was, therefore, essential to preserve these conditions, which meant the laying of a 24" concrete drain throughout the section of canal to be infilled, but this created more problems than were envisaged. The lock was filled with black slurry, tree branches and large stone blocks, all of which had to be removed before the drains could be laid.

Good progress was made on the actual mainlaying, but before the end connection into the existing pumping mains could be made, the fine weather which we had previously enjoyed, deteriorated, making working conditions extremely difficult.

This situation was further aggravated by a pressing need to finish the job so as not to hinder or delay Contractors, who had arrived on site at the beginning of December to construct a new access road.

At last, during the first week of January, work was finally completed, except for a little pipework to be extended into the new pumping station, expected to be done within the next few months.

F. T. LANGSTON.

WEEK-END SOLDIERS

Since feudal times there has always been a part-time army, ready to lay aside plough or pen, to answer the call to arms. In recent years this has been known as the Territorial Army, lately re-named the Territorial & Army Volunteer Reserve.

The T.A. and the air and naval reserves took a large part in the early stages of World War II; the survivors returning to train men drafted under emergency powers. The Reserve regards itself now as part of the international force of N.A.T.O., rather than as a purely national army.



Who volunteers and why? Recruits come from all walks of life, from dukes to dustmen. Many join in order to continue the association with military life which they enjoyed as regulars. Whilst for the younger ones it is an interesting hobby with a full and lively social life.

Well, what do we do in our drill halls when most sensible people are snoozing away Sunday's beer and beef? To be ready to take our place alongside regular troops we have to undergo exactly the same training, in drill, weapon firing, tactics, fieldcraft, driving and map reading and pass the same trade tests.

Recently we received training in the use of helicopters. As you will see from the photograph, the local population found this quite diverting, especially when we had to jump down about ten feet, while the blessed thing hovered!

EDWIN LEE.

WATKINS — ON Newport

Mr. E. A. Newport is employed at Walsall as Assistant Superintendent—Consumer Services, a position he has held for the past seven years.

Mr. Newport is the dedicated type of person that the water industry seems to breed.

When he retires in May, 1973, he will have completed almost 44 years' unbroken service.

On the day I called to see him, I was confronted by Bert's large shape sitting behind a Victorian, double-sided desk, reputed to have belonged to a past Engineer-in-Chief.

"Were you born locally, Bert?"

"Yes, I was born in a small terraced house, in Teddesley Street, Walsall; one of a family of five."

"Did you enjoy school life, Bert?"

"Well I did to a certain extent, but I was glad to leave at 14 years of age, times were hard and every bit of income into the household helped."

"When did you join the Company?"

"28th November, 1929; I started at Tipton Depot as a waste inspector, on one month's probation, at the princely sum of one shilling an hour, rising to 1s.1d. after the probationary period. Unfortunately, there was a cut back in wages and this was reduced to 1s.1d."

"Were the hours long, in the early years, Bert?"

"Yes, we used to work 48 hours a week and every third week on nights, testing the apparatus for waste."

"I believe you remained at Tipton for about 9 or 10 months, before transferring to Walsall."

"Yes, that's right; Mr. Parrott was Chief Waste Inspector then and he was a first-



class instructor. At Walsall I became District Inspector in 1941 and eventually Assistant Superintendent in 1961, taking up the new post of Assistant Superintendent—Consumer Services in 1965."

"Does any particular incident stand out in your memory?"

"There were so many. We used to go out in all weathers; hail, rain or snow. I can recall being out on waste water meter charting, when I've lifted the

lid off the pit and it's frozen to the footpath.

"The funniest incident I can recall was when I was helping with a recent survey on discoloration. I knocked on a door and was confronted by a lady, on whose shoulder sat a large, green and red parrot. I began, 'My name is Newport, I'm from the South Staffordshire Waterworks Company, would you mind answering a few questions?'; when the parrot piped up '— off!' and the lady shut the door."

"Did you go through the war period with the Company, Bert?"

"Yes, I was exempted from



the Forces and spent the duration with the Company, as a jack of all trades. We lost a lot of employees into the Forces of course, which made it hard going for those that were left, what with fire watching as well. To ease the labour problem we tried employing juniors from school and also women waste inspectors, neither of which was a success.

"One incident I remember well, happened one night while I was on fire watching duty. Enemy planes were overhead and suddenly there was a loud explosion nearby. The chap in the control office ran out shouting 'My pressure's dropped 45 lbs.' I said, 'Yes, it's on the 24' at Friars Park.' Sure enough, minutes later a report came in that a bomb had fractured the 24" main.



"I was relieved of fire watching and I went straight out to the scene with Mr. Robertson, the Engineer-in-Chief. On the way we spotted a red glow over Birmingham. He said, 'Do you know where that is, Newport?' I said, tongue in cheek, 'Yes, it looks like Sheepcote Street.'"

"When we arrived at Friars Park, it was clear that the bomb had dropped almost dead centre on the main, and to give you some idea of the size of

the crater, it took 10 pipe lengths to repair it.

"That was one of the longest periods I think I've ever worked without a break, we were at it non-stop for 36 hours, in order to provide emergency water supplies for almost the whole of West Bromwich the next day."

"Do you have any hobbies or interests outside work?"

"If you can call football mania a hobby, that's mine. I've watched football religiously ever since I can remember and still stand on the terraces."

"How do you view the re-organisation of the water industry, Bert?"

"Well, I think that there is an optimum size for a firm and if it grows past that you lose the team spirit, especially if it is controlled from outside by people who don't appreciate the local problems."

"Finally, Bert, have you any plans for your retirement?"

"That's a simple answer, I just want to be able to come and go as I please; in a nutshell, retire!"

GRAHAM WATKINS

Good Health!

The Company safety committee has met at three monthly intervals, since it was formed in 1971, to discuss the application of correct safety practices, the development of an awareness among all employees of the need for safe-working methods and the observation of all appropriate statutory requirements.

Accident statistics for 1972 have shown a decreasing number in each quarter, a pattern which it is hoped you will repeat in 1973.

The Chief Inspector of Factories has stated that a worker, accepting an employer's offer of employment, has the right to expect that industrial hazards are under control.

In the same way as we rely on the purity of water coming from the tap, we should be confident that the air we breathe at work is safe, that our work place is free from physical hazard and that noise to which we are exposed is not building up deafness, which will only become apparent in later life. Equally, the employer has a right to expect that those safety devices which he provides are used.

The Robens Report on Safety and Health at Work, published during 1972, was the first major review of occupational safety since 1933, and highlighted the importance of the effects of work on health.

In its future deliberations, the committee intends to concern itself equally with safety, health and welfare.

GEORGE WALTON

The Social Security Bill

The Bill at present before Parliament contains proposals which are expected to come into operation in April, 1975.

The main changes envisaged are:—

Earnings related contributions—to be collected on a P.A.Y.E. basis for financing the basic state benefits including pension, sickness and unemployment. The present flat rate contribution by means of a national insurance stamp will cease.

A State Reserve Pension Scheme—to replace the graduated pension scheme. Graduated pension earned up to April, 1975, will be 'frozen' and added to the basic pension at retirement.

Employers having pension schemes which satisfy certain tests will be able to seek exemption from the State reserve scheme for their employees.

R. G. CLARKE

Staff Association A.G.M.

Twenty-five members attended the Staff Association Club's A.G.M. on Wednesday, February 28th, 1973. The Chairman, Mr. R. G. Clarke, gave an account of the functions arranged, during the past 12 months, including the visit to Norway, theatre trips and film evenings, and thanked all who had given their support.

The treasurer's report gave rise to some discussion of the Head Office canteen accounts and the Chairman hinted that due to dwindling funds canteen prices would have to be reviewed.

After the meeting, Mr. W. A. Markham and Mr. P. F. Thomas gave a short informative talk on the Company's future within the re-organised water industry, and Mr. C. Packwood outlined the activities of N.A.L.G.O. in relation to the Staff Association.

JIM LAND