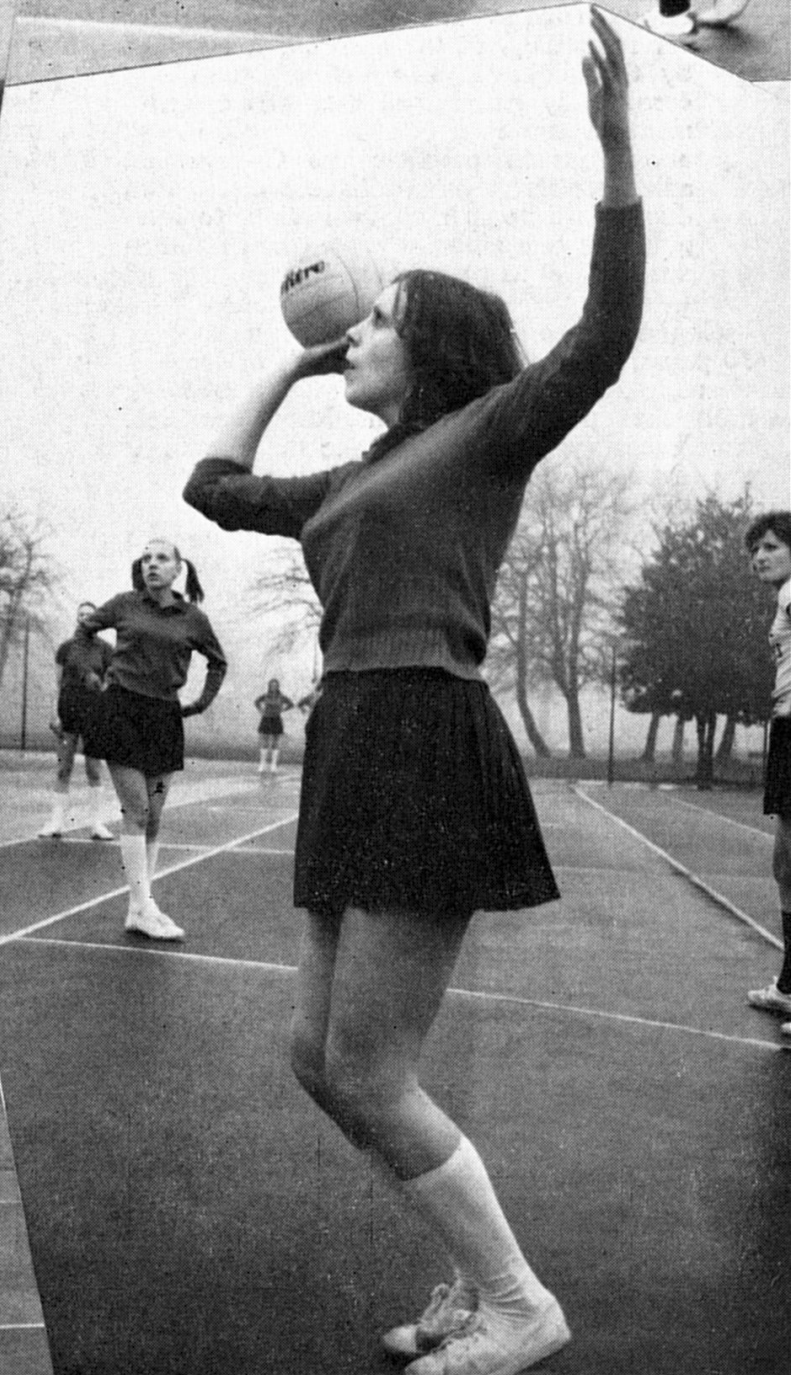
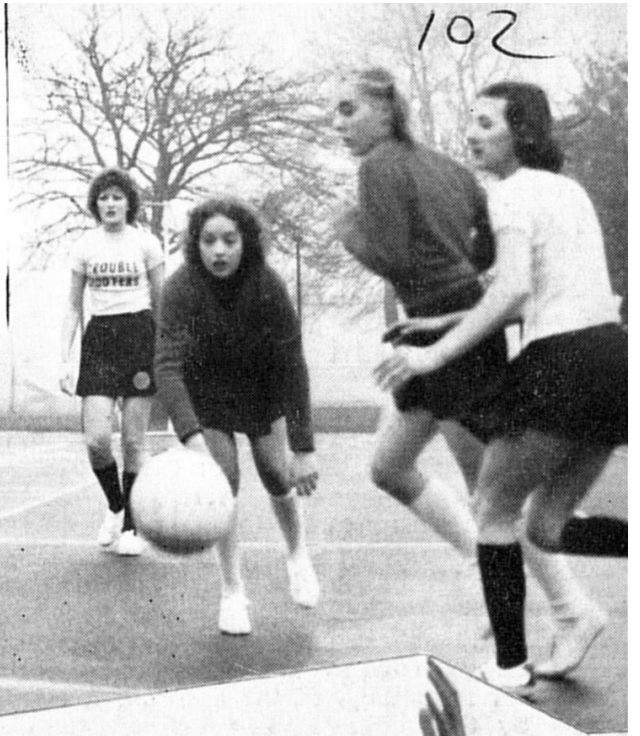


# NEWS REVIEW

of The South Staffordshire Waterworks Company

APRIL 1976



# STOP PRESS!

## Review of the Water Industry in England and Wales

Employees will be aware from Press reports that the Government have issued a consultative document regarding the future of the water industry in England and Wales and that consultation is to take place prior to the 31st July, 1976. There are specific references to water companies as follows:—

“The Water Act 1973 provided for the retention of the 28 water companies in England and Wales. The companies, now acting as agents for the water authorities, account for some 22% of the total water supplied by the industry. The Labour Party has consistently maintained that this arrangement is both wrong in principle and anomalous in practice; the Government adhere to this view and have decided, with due regard to fair compensation, to integrate the companies into the water authorities as soon as practicable.”

Copies of the document, which runs to over 30 pages, are available from Heads of Departments, Area Engineers and Superintendents, and the principal Union Representatives. Employees who wish to refer to the document are invited to do so.

The matter is being carefully considered by the Company and further statements will be issued from time to time as necessary.

A. W. TIBBENHAM      JAMES LAMONT  
*Secretary*              *Engineer-in-Chief*

## NEWS REVIEWED

The New Year blew well and truly in with some of the strongest gales for many years. Damage estimated at more than £10,000 was caused to a total of 57 of the Company's installations, worst hit being Fradley, Shenstone and Bourne Vale Pumping Stations. At Bourne Vale, emergency measures were required to protect the pumping equipment from the weather. Electricity failures played havoc with pumping equipment all over the Company's area. We were fortunate, however, in sustaining little damage compared with some other undertakings.

February brought snow, fortunately not a lot, but it persisted several days, accompanied by a severe cold spell. More than 50 burst mains occurred on the week-end 7th/8th and a considerable effort was put in by Area Office staff dealing with these and locating and repairing a number of undetected bursts caused by the frost. Walsall Control Office was also inundated with calls from consumers whose pipes had frozen or burst.

The Company received a compliment in the press when the financial surplus for 1975 was reported. In a report, somewhat biased in our favour, it was stated that the Severn-Trent Water Authority's charges are higher than ours, and they are not anticipating a surplus. According to "Stream", the S-TW.A. newspaper, the recent Law Lords' decision, to stop sewerage charges being levied on properties not connected to the sewer, will be a significant factor in the rates increase their consumers are shortly to face.

The new 18 megalitres capacity reservoir at Glascote was commissioned recently, after the contractors had overcome some initial floor leakage problems. The reservoir has been built as part of the overall supply scheme to the developing Tamworth new town.

News Review's photographer and satirist, Graham Watkins, Technical Officer in the Byelaws and Fittings Section at Head Office, now has another photographic assignment. His wife, Joan, presented him with a 7 lb. 2 oz. son on 16th February. Congratulations to both.

*This issue's cover illustrates the dynamism with which the South Staffs.' girls attack their netball . . . see write up on back page.*

## In this issue, are included . . .

- Amateur Theatricals
- Wood Green Feature
- History of Plumbing—episode 2
- Two gems from cartoonist Pete Bosley
- Grand Prix racing cars
- Letters to the Editor
- and our usual news, views and personal notes

## EDITORIAL

A recent newcomer to the Company was surprised at the great concern for economy throughout the workforce, as compared with other organisations he had worked for. This is flattering indeed, but from my own observations, quite true. A lot of soul-searching takes place about the need for any particular item of expenditure, and at every level of involvement, the question is asked "is it necessary and how much will it cost?"

On the operations side, great savings have been made, inter alia, in the way pumping stations are operated, maximising the use of off-peak, lower cost electricity. After-hours work has been drastically reduced, except for dealing with emergencies.

However, one can become narrow sighted over the matter of economy, and short term savings may result in long term additional expenditure, or a lowering of essential standards. In an age of increasing scarcity of resources, preparing reports on the advantages of saving this or that may be accepted as part of the exercise, but we all, I am sure, wonder if quite so much paper is necessary, not only at work but in our daily lives. Perhaps we could all adopt a new slogan—"save words—save trees".

On a brighter note—the Company ended 1975 in the black, so there are modest smiles in certain areas of Head Office. The rest of us "just keep on 'conomisin'".

In this Spring edition, we bring you more of the interesting saga of the smallest room, an insight into Wood Green workshops at the end of an era, and the end of an aria from D.D.'s operatic star. We have a pin-up in the best traditions of the Sex Discrimination Act.

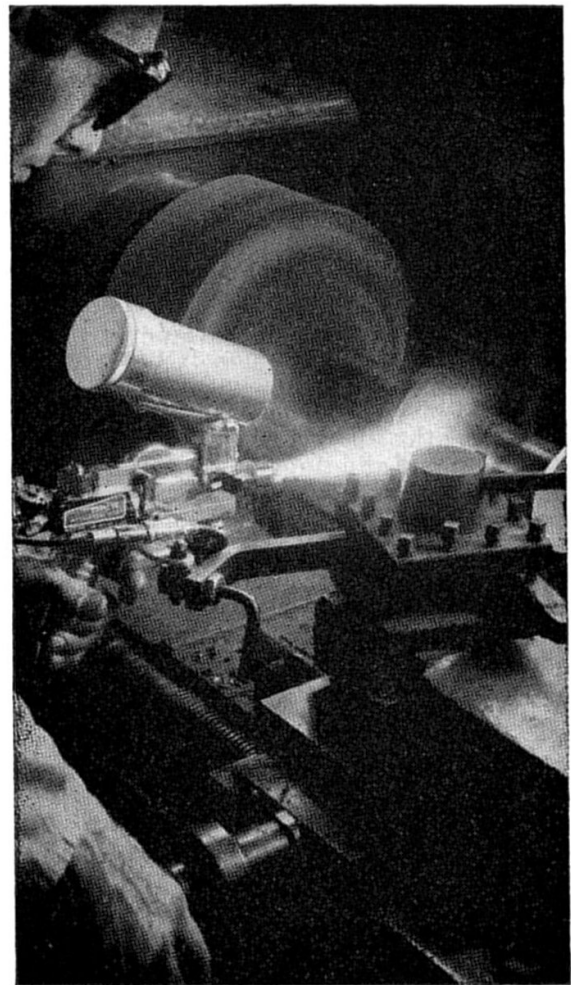
The highlight of the Editorial Team's new year was the large number of comments and letters received on the content of the December issue. Thank you everyone for your interest and criticism. It's your magazine, so keep the letters and features coming.

**EDITOR**

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## METAL SPRAYING

Over recent months the machine shop at Wood Green Depot has been using the latest equipment and techniques in the maintenance of worn pump parts. Worn surfaces can be built back to their original size by the use of a technique called "metallizing" or "metal spraying".



*Metal spraying at Wood Green*

The process uses a "gun" through which powdered metal is projected at high temperatures and deposited onto the worn component, building it up, so enabling it to be machined to its original size.

It was in the 1920's that the process was pioneered and early applications were usually for putting corrosion-resistant coatings onto metal components. Powdered zinc was generally used for this purpose.

By the use of metal spraying it is possible to spray differing characteristic metals onto various base metals. A phosphor-bronze pump impeller may, for example, be sprayed with a wear-resisting stainless steel alloy. This not only allows recovery of the worn impeller, but provides a longer wearing surface.

**DAVID COLDICOTT**

## HISTORY OF PLUMBING

Sir John Harington's invention of a valved, wash-down closet was not improved upon until 1775, when Alexander Cummings patented his design for a w.c. This was probably because at this time few dwellings had provision to store water in an elevated position; in fact very few dwellings had a piped water supply at all. Water was generally supplied from private wells or by conduit to a public place, where people collected it.

It appears that the commonest method of sanitary disposal into an underground sewer system in those days was the pan closet, a refinement of the night stool or commode chair. It was cheap and did not require a piped water supply. It consisted of an upper earthenware hopper discharging into a lower copper pan, containing about 4" of water which acted as an air seal between sewer and house. The pan could be tilted so that its contents could be discharged into the drain pipe, unlike the night stool which had to be emptied by hand. The copper pan was then refilled with water; see fig. 1. This type of closet was declared unhealthy by sanitary reformers of the day but many were still in use well into the 19th century.

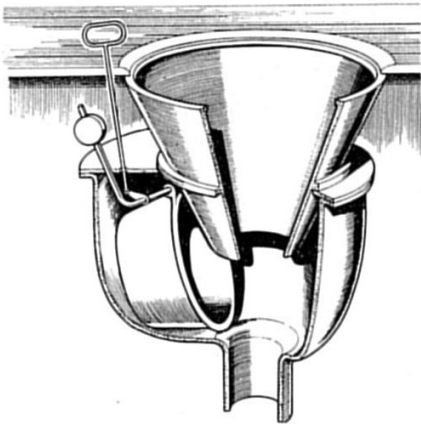


Fig. 1. Pan Closet, circa 1760.

Cummings, a horologist by profession, was far more successful, it seems, with w.c.'s than with marine chronometers. In 1775 he was granted patent nr. 1105 for a "water closet upon a new construction". It was a vast improvement on Harington's effort, as can be seen from fig. 2, with its more elaborate valve mechanism, and the glazed earthenware bowl. By lifting the handle, which operated a sliding valve at the base, the contents were passed into the drainpipe below. Simultaneously a valve opened on the water pipe allowing water to enter, flushing the bowl.

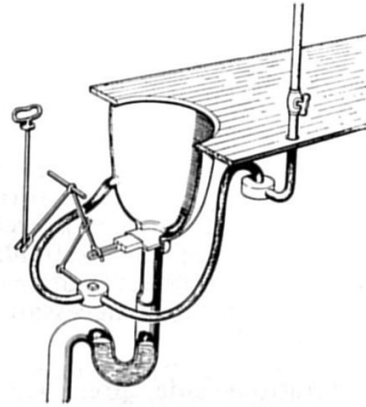


Fig. 2. Cummings Patent Model of 1775.

It had three major drawbacks. Firstly, the sliding valve often seized up due to rust and encrustations, secondly, the water flush didn't work too well and delivered water too low down the bowl to really clean it and, thirdly, it was highly susceptible to frost damage.

The year 1777, saw the next patent by Samuel Prosser, in which he claimed novelty over Cummings by including a crude ball float arrangement, so that when the contents were discharged by opening the sluice valve the ball dropped and allowed water to enter the bowl. When the sluice valve was closed the water continued to enter until the ball float engaged its seating. It was not a success, however, as the mechanism frequently leaked allowing precious water to run to waste.

**GRAHAM WATKINS**

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## ACCIDENT STATISTICS

For the period January to December, 1975, a total of 606 working days were lost by employees, compared to 865 working days for the same period of 1974.

Everyone is to be congratulated for this drop in lost time, which is due in part to the increasing diligence of employees in reporting hazards.

However, minor accidents dropped by only five in the same period, which shows that there is still more room for care!!!

## GRAND PRIX—VIEW

On Wednesday, the 25th February, twenty members of the Company's jet set visited the works of the Shadow Formula 1 motor racing team. The group, on arrival, were shown over the car to be raced by J. P. Jarier in the South African Grand Prix; the mechanics were still working on the car prior to its being shipped to South Africa the following day. It was amazing to learn that the car, capable of 180 m.p.h., weights only as much as a Mini and most of that is in the Ford Cosworth engine.

The party divided into two groups to be shown around the works to find out how the cars are prepared and the amount of work which goes on behind the scenes. We also looked over the Can-Am car in which the Lord Mayor of Birmingham was driven around the city centre during the Motor Festival. Jean Bradshaw (D.D.) pictured, had the privilege of getting behind the wheel of the Can-Am racer, but despite her pleading was forbidden a trial.

It has been reported that Administration Dept. is to monitor the Wood Green budget closely since Messrs. Alan Jones, David Coldicott, Dave Winders and Alan Lander were spotted in one corner of the factory planning how Wood Green might burst onto the Grand Prix scene with "Aqua Landa".

The group completed the evening with a flying visit to the local, and were amazed to see a usually sober colleague, Angela!!, beat the record for the course—downing three whiskies in two minutes from a standing start! Seriously, the group reflected on what had been a thoroughly enjoyable outing.

**RON REED**



## DARTING ABOUT

The "second sitting darters", being bored with exotic games like Killer, 301, and Shanghai, embarked on a far greater adventure—that of tactics.

The game dates back to Roman times—Latin name *Tacticus*—when Centurians used to pepper unsuspecting Christians with arrows and javelins. This practice resulted in an acute shortage of Christians, so a Roman Emperor called Trebla Twenti invented the dart board. This proved rather futile until, in 1836, Jack Bull made the first set of darts. Once again tactics became a popular game.

The game is based on two themes, the first to score as many points as possible, the second to block the opponent and stop him or her from scoring. The basic game includes the bull down to number 10. To score you need three, a treble, double and single or three singles, of any one number. Any amount scored on top of that number afterwards counts towards your total. To stop you scoring your opponent also has to get three of the same number. The numbers can be scored on in any order. The game ends when either all possible score lines are blocked or you have effectively sown up all scoring avenues, having a larger total than your opponent.

Such has been the interest in the game that the eight darters on second sitting have formed a tactics league. The team, when all present, play against each other on a competitive basis.

Present league positions are: 1, John Morrall and Geoff Thomason; 2, Geoff Evans and Andy Willmott; 3, Brian Walker and Ron Rainbow; 4, Terry Tapper and Colin Leaper. But the individual cup competition should sort out the men from the boys. Look out for further news!

**JOHN MORRALL**



## “OVERTURE— CURTAIN LIGHTS”

When you come to think of it, music, to a greater or lesser extent, plays an important part in all our lives. We listen to radio, sing in church or bath and kick our heels to it at parties, even the ‘works annual do’.

My own personal musical extravaganza is amateur operatics and dramatics. The New Arcadian Operatic Society to which I belong meets at Harborne Hill school every Tuesday and Friday. There are about 25 operatic societies in the Birmingham area, with something like 1,300 budding Thespians eager to entertain their fellows.

A hankering for show business was awakened in me back in 1966, when I was roped into an entertainment evening put on by the employees in Head Office canteen. The Distribution Drawing Office provided a ‘drag’ act and I appeared as the South Staffs’ “Lulu”, complete with wig, mini-dress, make-up and padding.

Serious show business involvement started for me in 1968, when I assisted with the scenery for an ‘Arcadians’ production of “Brigadoon” at Aston University. Although I did not appear in public I felt very nervous and with the physical effort of humping props lost about 4 lbs. in weight over the week.

The next year, 1969, I joined the footlight brigade of the ‘Arcs’ and have been involved with a show every year since, including many of the more popular musicals, like Carousel, My Fair Lady, Orpheus in the Underworld and Oklahoma. My parts have covered a very wide scope including a sailor, cowboy, professor, Greek god, French gigolo and Persian pedlar.



*Len about to abscond with the tea money, and Len, the man who stopped him.*

Funny episodes during shows are generally tragedies at the time, which mellow with the telling and passing of the years. Dropped walking sticks and forgotten lines are all part of the magic of performing before an audience. Funny episodes even run over into work occasionally, as certain members of Consumer Service section may remember. When I played Mars in Orpheus in the Underworld, I had to wear tights. After buying a pair one lunch time I was discreetly trying them on for size in the Gents, when much to my dismay certain items which I had taken off, were ‘nicked’ and carried off as trophies, leaving me in tights and shirt tails.



The highlight of the operatic society year is of course the big show week, but a lot of hard work goes on all year round, on musical and dramatic rehearsal. During the so-called closed season the society also puts on concert parties and cabaret shows for charities and senior citizens’ clubs and of course a carol concert trip to the local hospital.

Many is the time I have heard people say, “I can’t act or sing”, but if you have time to spare from the ‘goggle box’, look in and see me and arrange to come along to a rehearsal and try it for yourself. Amateur groups are always glad to get help, whatever you want to do.

Our show this year is “Waltzes from Vienna” and is being put on at the “Old Repertory Theatre”, Station Street, Birmingham, from October 25th to 30th. It is a colourful and cheerful musical from the pens of the great Strauss family. See you all there!

LEN JACKSON,  
*D.D. Drawing Office*

## WOOD GREEN SCENE

### History

Over recent years the pumping at Wood Green has been gradually reduced. The fact that, with the completion of Walsall booster station, the pumps are no longer required brings to an end a pumping era which started near the beginning of the Company's formation.

Wood Green was the third pumping station to be built following Sandfields and Coneycgre, and commenced pumping into supply in 1872. The station was built to re-pump water from the trunk main laid along the railway from Lichfield into the trunk main serving the Dudley area.

Most of the original buildings are still in use as the Central workshops. The beam engine house is now used as an electricians' shop, and an extension built in 1877 to house an additional beam engine is now the machine shop. The original boiler house is the present water meter repair section. Further extensions were made in 1910 for a third engine which was a steam vertical triple expansion rotative unit. The present electrically driven pump, one of three installed in 1920, is now positioned in this building.

The problems of the high cost of electricity were with us even in those days, and because of this in 1926 a steam turbo-alternator was installed. It was capable of a continuous output of 320 kilowatts, sufficient to power any two of the three pumps.

Many people were involved in the running of the station, driving the engines, stoking the boilers, offloading the coal from the railway and all the usual work involved in maintaining output from a steam station. All of this is now passing into the history of the Company.

DAVID COLDICOTT,  
*Workshop Superintendent.*



*Wood Green workshops*

## Lock-up Time at Wood Green

Gravestone shadows cease to lengthen,  
Melting into hallowed reverence.  
Smokeless stack pokes angry finger  
Into ebony sky —  
Blaming who for steam's demise?  
Ugly bricks reflect the soul  
Of former man and times . . .  
Dour, uncompromising, incongruous,  
In the age of ball point pens.

Tarmac'd yard, oil stained rainbow glints,  
Sawdust flecks mocking the illusion.  
Vending cup brawls with the breeze,  
A hollow poly-plastic sound.

Chattering sparrows flutter in the eaves,  
Uneased by night's unknowns,  
Contrasting man's long dormant sensitivity.  
Chill sigh of wind tugs the door,  
Echoing ghosts ethereal bodies —  
Revenants from bygone years.

Blacksmith's hammer rests from vibrant blows,  
Blackened hearth in cold repose,  
Quickened not by bellows breath.  
Anvils snobbish visor nose,  
Pointing the way to rural ages.  
Rows of extended dials like giant poplars,  
In fields of ripened meters stand.

Cathedral-like, a history scented ambience  
Pervades the towering station.  
Hushed the choirs monotonous drone,  
Stilled the throb of engine and motor  
Unheralded their passing. Condemned  
and condemning apathy and ingratitude.  
Can looking forward excuse looking back?

Lathe and drill bereft of skilful touch,  
Stand in swarf-swathed stillness.  
Slurry's final drip loses its nightly struggle  
To retain a resting place on the chuck.  
Dust sparkled fluorescent glare punctuates the  
dark  
Illuminating paper covered desks.

Empty shops, silent stores,  
Empty garages, lifeless offices;  
Empty shells of human memories.

Locked gate and door, keep who out?  
Shut what in?  
Keys turn seals the tomb,  
The resting place of fears and hopes  
Quietened just till clocking on.

ALAN LANDER.

## SASSENACH'S APPROVAL

The lowlands of Scotland are not noted as a holiday centre, although it possesses a fine variety of scenery. Last year I decided to give it a go and explore the area.

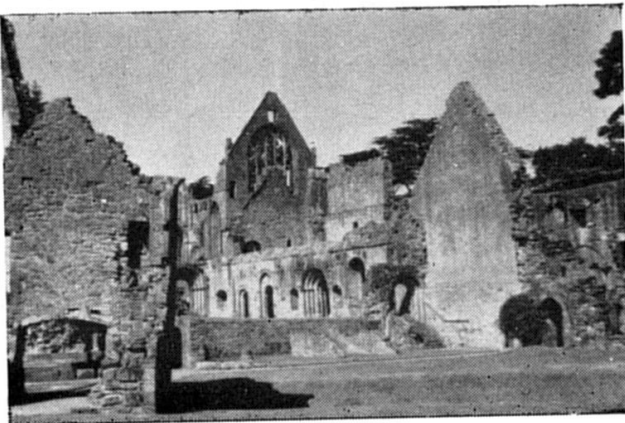
Around Melrose are the ruins of four abbeys which were founded during the reign of David I (1124-53). The monks who lived there developed agriculture and established a woollen industry which survives to this day. This part was also notorious for the frequent border raids and the abbeys were often pillaged but were subsequently rebuilt until the time of the Reformation.

Jedburgh abbey which is built of red sandstone dominates the town of Jedburgh, while the one at Melrose is the 'Kennaquhair' of Scott's "Monastery". Probably the finest setting is that of Dryburgh abbey situated on the banks of the river Tweed and founded in 1150. The border country was the home Sir Walter Scott and he is buried here together with Field Marshal Earl Haig.

While working in the Galloway area I was able to visit some of the abbeys; Sweetheart Abbey to the east of Dumfries is so named because Devorguila, the daughter of the last king of Galloway, ordered that her husband's heart should be buried with her before the high altar.

Further along the Solway coast is Dundrennan abbey, a Cistercian Monastery founded by Fergus of Galloway; here it is said, Mary Queen of Scots spent her last night in Scotland. The Solway coast was not only a centre for early Christianity but the many small sheltered bays provided suitable points for smugglers to unload their boats. This part of Scotland has many attractions and the mild climate enables a wide variety of plants to grow. The area is well worth a visit!

DAVE PEARSON.



• Dryburgh Abbey

## RETIREMENTS

BILL EVANS, leading waste inspector,  
at Cannock, on 1.12.75.

JO WILLIS, waste inspector,  
at Cannock, on 1.3.76.

We wish you a long and happy retirement.

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## COMPETITION

The competition continues to be popular, judging by the many entries received and the number of people who asked me leading questions.

The last News Review, disastrously for the Editor, contained two accidental mistakes as well as a deliberate one.

One was the reference to the Home Guard in 1938, which was due to the published photograph being found in the pages of the October 1938 "Review" and being assumed to belong there. However, those of you sufficiently my senior to remember or have served in the Home Guard assure me that it was not formed until about June 1940. The other accidental error was to refer to page numbers of pages that had not been numbered.

Hard as the decision was it was decided to stick with the *deliberate* mistake as the only correct answer. Congratulations are therefore in order to Mrs. Linda Harvey, Clerical Assistant at Cannock Area Office, who receives £5 for spotting the deliberate inclusion of a false title in the list of contents.

## A Gran's Ma

Not a great-grandmother, but anagrams. That is what the competition in this issue is all about. Ten items all connected with water supply are listed below. The letters have been re-arranged to form new words. Sort them out! Entries please to "The Editor", News Review, Head Office. As usual, a £5 prize will be given to the person submitting the first all correct entry to be opened on April 14th.

HAND TRY, TAN IN MURK, MEN AT WAR, STARES, NEW PARTIES COST, PATS POST, STUB PIPER, RIVER SORE, CORN MUSE, PINTS IN A POT MUG.

Example: ME TEAR TREWS = water meters.



## PERSONALIA

### Welcome

to the newcomers who have recently joined us.

- JIM KELLY, caretaker,  
at Head Office, on 1.12.75.
- COLIN LEAPER, clerical assistant,  
buying section at Head Office, on 1.12.75.
- BILL WINTER, assistant electrical engineer,  
at Head Office, on 1.12.75.
- HILDA SPEAKE, catering supervisor,  
at Head Office, on 8.12.75.
- JENNY BROWN, clerical assistant,  
revenue section, at Head Office, on 22.12.75.
- YVONNE EVANS, punch-room operator,  
at Head Office, on 5.1.76.
- BILL DREVER, trenchman,  
at Burton, on 8.1.76.
- TOM PRICE, labourer/handyman,  
at Hampton Loade, on 8.1.76.
- GARSON CUMMINGS, assistant electrical  
engineer, at Head Office, on 19.1.76.
- JOHN LINDLEY, technician engineer,  
at Wood Green, on 2.2.76.
- TERRY McALLISTER, deputy area engineer,  
at Walsall, on 2.2.76.
- JUNE JERVIS, telephonist,  
at Head Office, on 16.2.76.

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### Congratulations

To:—

ANDY MEADOWS (Head Office—D.D.) and  
his wife PAULINE on the birth of baby Paul  
James, on January 21st.

TRACY FARNDON (Tracing Section—D.D.)  
and ROBERT SHEEDY, were married on  
January 17th.



### Gold Watches

Gold watches were presented by the Chairman, Sir Charles Burman, in commemoration of 25 years' service, to:—

#### January

- PETER DARBY, district section leader,  
secretary's department, at Head Office.
- GEORGE EADES, clerical assistant, buying  
section, at Head Office.
- JACK EVERETT, storekeeper, building section,  
at Wednesbury.
- CHARLIE PEATE, district inspector, at  
Walsall.
- RON WALFORD, area maintenance operative,  
at Coneysgre.

#### March

- BILL CHAPMAN, filter operator, at Chilcote.
- BILL PEARSON, waterman, at Walsall.
- VIC STOYLE, labourer, at Tipton.
- ERIC YAPP, ganger, at Cannock.



*Andy Meadows*

### Springtime Dollyperson

In line with Government legislation, News Review presents its pin-up person to gladden the hearts of all female people at South Staffs. (Sorry, that's discrimination, please ignore the word "female".)

Andy Meadows, 38-30-34, works in the Forward Planning Office of D.D.; having moved there from Walsall Control a year ago. Andy is married with two children (did I hear sighs!), and is interested in hi-fi, science fiction and table tennis.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Your Editor was delighted to receive the following correspondence from readers. Please keep the letters coming.

### New View of News Review

"Dear Sir,

I was very impressed with the October edition of the News Review, it is the best issue published for a long time. This is not only my impression as several readers have expressed the same opinion.

The presentation was first-class, in particular the cover showing Walter Winwood on his bike, also the articles were varied, interesting and topical.

I think congratulations are due to the editorial staff and I hope the high standard can be maintained."

Dennis Drew,  
Control Assistant.

### Dad's Army

I can put a few names to the photograph of the Home Guard featured in the last issue writes Alec Roberts, of Ashwood Pumping Station. The first from the left is George Wiggin, who was a bricklayer in the Lichfield area. Next to him is Sid Smith, ex Sandfields, fifth from the left I think is Charlie Adie, one time foreman at Sandhills, and extreme right on the back row is Phil Neale, George Wiggin's mate.

Front row left is my brother Bob, who although never employed by the Company was in the Company's Home Guard. Next to him I think is Harold Gee who used to drive the steam lorry, carrying slack between Shenstone railway station and Shenstone and Bourne Vale pumping stations. Alongside him is Sam Moulton, leading waste inspector at Sutton, he was in the Coldstream Guards in the 1914-18 War, and by him is my father, late foreman at Shenstone pumping station. Incidentally, the Company was certainly on the ball raising and equipping a Home Guard unit before war broke out!"

Quite a memory, Alec, though it is not surprising that you recognise your own relations! The complete line-up were:—

Back row, left to right: G. Wiggin, J. Robins, G. Edwards, W. Dodd, C. Adie, E. Horobin, P. Neale.

Front row: A. E. Roberts, H. H. Gee, Sgt. S. F. Moulton, Sgt. I. Roberts, Cpl. W. E. Calcutt, Cpl. A. Hutchings.

ED.

## Uncle Sam

"Dear Sir,

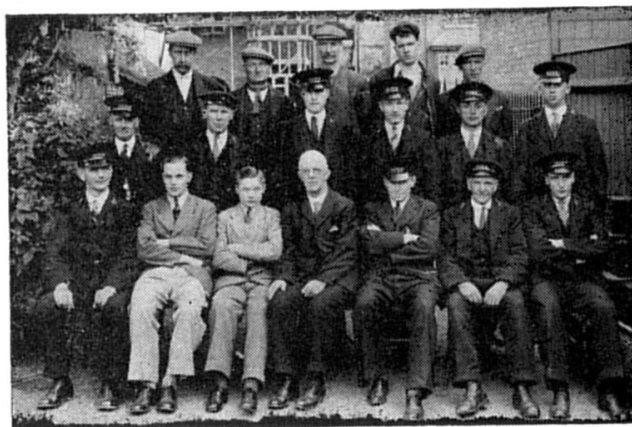
I am the nephew of Samuel Fletcher Moulton, who was Waste Inspector at Sutton Coldfield Depot. As my uncle has been in hospital for about 20 years, I have been looking after his affairs and receive the News Review on his behalf. I would like to add that I read it and find it of great interest, though I am not even an ex-employee of the Company.

In December 1975's issue, there is a photo of 'Dads Army', in which my uncle appears. He is the sergeant third from the left, front row.

My uncle is now 87 years old and even though he has lived so many years in a hospital, he is quite content with his way of life, and I feel I have given him a lot of pleasure with my visits. I have written to you in case any employees might be interested to know about my uncle.

Can I add that, as I have lived in Sutton Coldfield all my life, I can remember when a car going down the Parade was something to be looked at, and I am only 56 years old. The map on page four of your Review made me realise how fast the area has grown and how difficult it would be to record the changes if people like John Hill did not draw maps while there are still those alive to give the information needed."

B. C. Moulton.



Sam Moulton, front row far left, in a photograph sent to us by his nephew. The people in the picture are Sutton Depot staff, I suspect, though Mr. Moulton does not say so. Anyone there you know? May be we have a regular who's who developing here—the more the merrier! — Ed.

## PERSONALLY SPEAKING

The role of the personnel section is fundamental to the success of the operation of the Company. Although the majority of the employees will doubtless have some idea of this role, it is possible that some important aspects may not be widely evident.

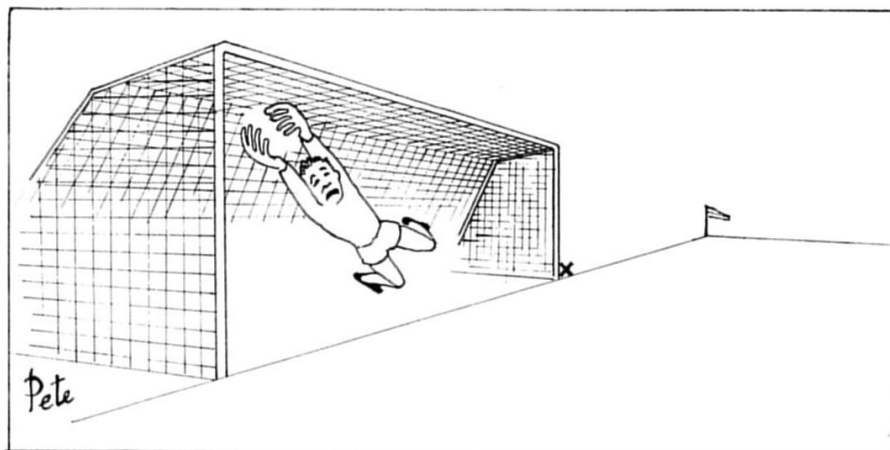
The recruiting of labour, involvement with wages and salary administration and various functions such as joint consultative committees are the obvious activities of the section; but the staff undertake a more comprehensive service than this.

Employees of all departments may, at some time, encounter problems, perhaps of a domestic nature. They could very well need information or guidance on some personal matter that falls outside the normal boundary of a work query. Ideally, all Company employees should be aware that the personnel section exists to assist and guide them in a very positive way. You have only to contact your supervisor to arrange a chat with the member of the section best suited to help.

The personnel staff may not have an answer to every problem but are confident of being of some assistance in all cases, if only in as much as suggesting an alternative source of information or advice. All matters are treated in the strictest confidence, and all employees, from the youngest to the oldest, are encouraged to use this service.

The section is part of the Administration Department and the staff includes Cliff Bateman—Personnel Officer, Denis Chapman dealing with health, safety, welfare and training, Ron Reed with industrial relations, Bron Thurston with recruitment and employee records and Arthur Twigg, Barry Bird and Sheila Phipps with wages and general administration.

CLIFF BATEMAN



## FOOTBALL NEWS

Since the last News Review there has been a slight improvement in the team's overall performance, though we still lack the consistency of last season.

Our progress in the Walsall F.A. Challenge Cup only went as far as the second round. We disposed of Goscote F.C. (Staffs. County League) 1-0, only to lose 4-2, after extra time, to Great Wyrley. This was a disappointing result as we were 2-0 up at half-time.

League performances have shown a lack of "killer instinct", as we have lost by the odd goal on numerous occasions having appeared the better of the two teams throughout the match.

On a happier note, a new club record was set on Saturday, 14th February, with 12 goals scored in one match—Paul Head netting 5 of these for a final result of S.S.W.W. 12, Bescot United 1.

Player of the month award, November — A. Porter; December—D. Davies; January—P. Berwick.

## League Results

Played 14, Won 4, Lost 7, Drawn 3, For 39, Against 32, Points 11.

JOHN MORRALL

## SPOT THE BALL Solution

X marks the correct position.  
There were no correct entries so the prize was divided between the editors.  
No correspondence will be entered into.  
P.S. The Bahama's were lovely last summer.

## GARDENING NOTES

Looking around my garden this Spring I was convinced that everything was more advanced than at the same time last year, which shows how mistaken one can be when relying on memory. Imagine my surprise, when browsing through my garden diary, to find that my rhododendrons were in full flower on the 29th January, '75, whereas this year they are about 25 days later.

It always seems to snow when iris stylosa are in flower and in some ways this rather enhances their appearance and does not seem to harm them.

Do you grow any of the following bulbs? If not I strongly recommend that you try a few, but first endeavour to see them in bloom either in a friend's garden or a coloured picture, to make sure that they are your kind of flower. Daffodils bulbocodium conspicuous, citrinus cyclamineous, triandrus alba, erythroneums (dog tooth violets), all quite short in growth. I am not very fond of tulips but I do appreciate the varieties Kaufmannia and Greegii. A rather unusual and bright, summer flowering bulb, which I can recommend, is Tigridia, also try acidanthera murielae.

Has the high price of vegetables this winter caused you to look round your garden to see whether you could start a small vegetable patch? If you have not done this before then do not be in too much of a hurry to plant except with such seeds as broad beans, parsnips, parsley and some of the hardy peas. Last year the late frost at the end of May caught my potatoes and runner beans, which were planted on the 12th April and 5th May respectively, and although we are unlikely to have so severe a frost two years running I intend to play it safe and plant later this year.

I have been called to task by Ron Beaman, of Walsall area office, who quite rightly points out that the plants and bulbs which I recommend you to protect are in fact winter hardy, nevertheless I am confident that they appreciate a little light covering.

RICHARD CHAMBERLAIN

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## A LADIES' GAME?

In May, 1975, a band of 13 girls were conned, nicely, by Carol Leechmere, into joining the Company netball team.

After many a practice game in the blazing sun, at Chamberlain Gardens, the final number became eight, and then, after more practice and some games against the men to "toughen

us up" (I won't mention the sprained ankles and bloody noses that the lads were forced to retire with), the team emerged as it stands to this day. There are eight, beautiful, enthusiastic, young ladies that brave the cold, each Saturday morning and Wednesday night, such is the call of duty!

We joined the league in September, at the lowest level, Division 10, but we did not find it all the bed of roses we had been led to expect; we had casualties with dislocated fingers, black eyes, scraped knees and so many bumps and bruises that the rule that reads "No personal contact between players" seems so far gone as to be out of sight. So we started training on a Wednesday evening at an indoor gymnasium in Balsall Heath, not the most popular of areas but the facilities are good. From there was formed the S.S., a popular abbreviation we find with most referees, still the same beautiful, enthusiastic, young ladies but now fit and ruthless as well, prepared to give an eye for an eye or a tooth for a tooth.

After the first half of the season we were lying fifth out of nine, on equal points with fourth place but lower goal averages, having won four out of eight matches. We had it on good advice that we were doing very well, this being our first season. Most of the matches have been played in good humour and have been keenly contested in diabolical conditions, such as the week that we had to sweep the snow off the court before we could play and even then the game was abandoned after ten minutes, as we played more on our bottoms than our feet.

One thing, the mass support has been noticeable for its absence. Why not come along and see us some time?

And here is one for you budding geniuses, we are looking for a new name—any suggestions?

SUE WARREN

