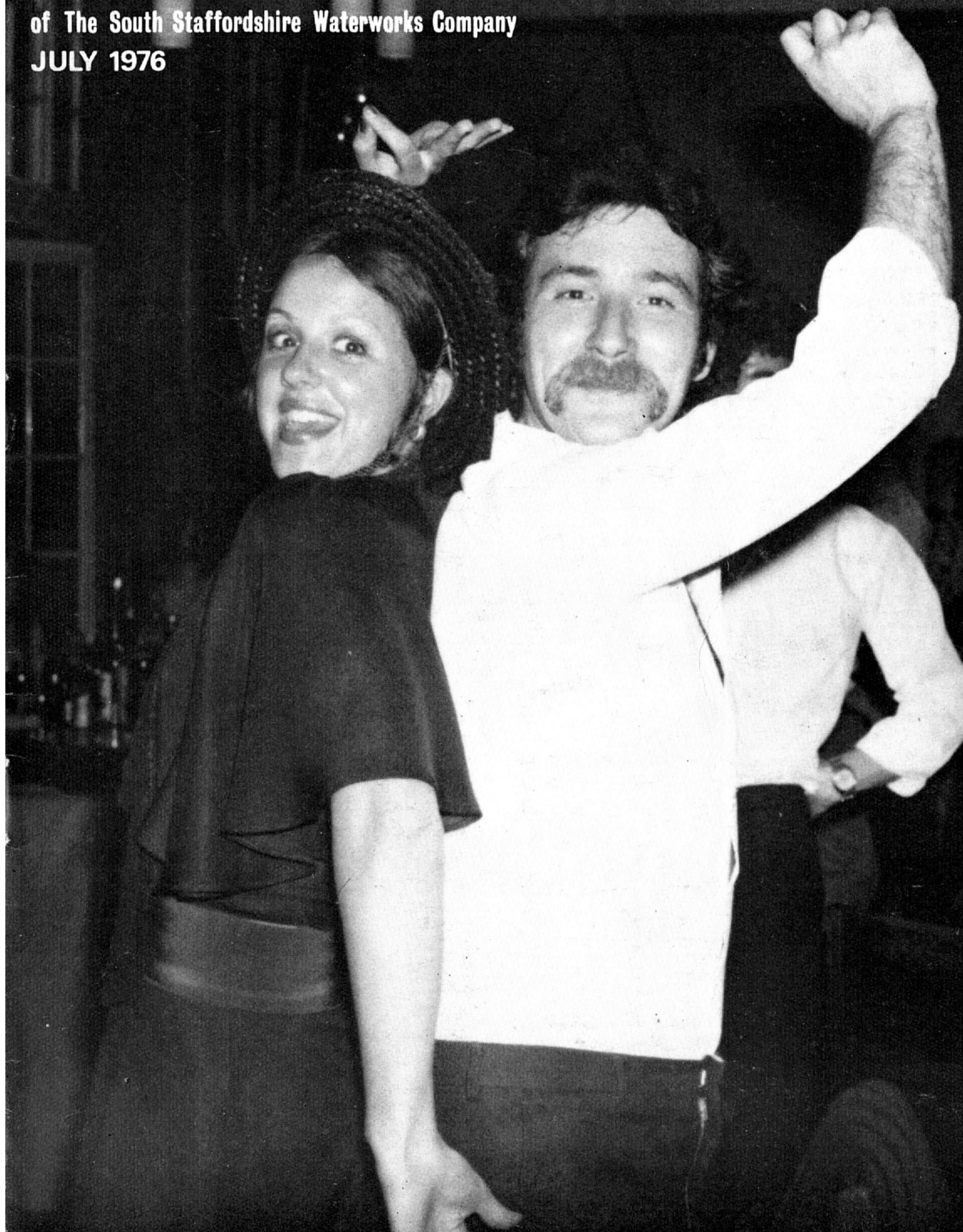


NEWS REVIEW

of The South Staffordshire Waterworks Company

JULY 1976

103



In this issue . . .

Spanish Evening

Just to be Sat On

Dudley Canal Trip

Hello Campers! and our usual news, views and personal notes.

This issue comes to you later than it was hoped, for which the editor apologises. The combination of holidays and the consequent increase in other work load made it impossible to get the magazine to you any sooner. If anyone wishes to complain, they can see me and will automatically be conscripted on to the *News Review* staff.

EDITOR

NEWS REVIEWED

Financial Year 1975

Water charges were increased substantially on the 1st July, 1975, due to the large increases in all running costs, arising from the high rate of inflation.

All employees are congratulated on their efforts to economise which helped the Company to turn in a greater operating surplus for the year than was anticipated.

A continuance of strict control of expenditure and the economies exercised by all employees have enabled the Company to impose a minimal increase of only 5% on the water charges for 1976.

Well done!

In April a 15" main burst in Somerfield Road, Sutton Coldfield, causing considerable damage to adjacent, low lying properties. The road was closed while repairs were carried out and the mishap was included in local television news.

Head Office canteen is running at a loss due to rising costs of ingredients and regrettably an increase in prices has had to be made.

Distribution Department with the help of Admin. ran a series of one day safety courses for trench grade operatives last month at Wednesbury training school. This is the start of a comprehensive safety training scheme to cover all employees in due course. The Engineer-in-Chief, who presided over each days programme, said he was most interested to receive so many useful comments from those attending.

After more than 48 years with the Company, Tipton Area Engineer, Mr. Ted Jones retired on 30th June. Starting in the gangs in 1929 he worked his way up to become Superintendent in 1955 and Area Engineer in 1974. A keen golfer he will no doubt have more time now to improve his handicap and we wish him a long and highly deserved retirement.

Jack Fisher who retired from Sandfields water treatment in 1960 has been named as craftsman of the year by Lichfield School of Art and Evening Institute for his skill as a cabinet maker. He visits the school twice a week to use the woodwork room and meet all his friends. He has made most of the furniture in his home.

EDITORIAL

At a Nalco branch meeting, held on April 22nd, there was a lively discussion on the future of this Company in relation to the rest of the water industry. The general tone of the meeting was that "we knew amalgamation with Severn-Trent would happen sooner or later, let it be sooner rather than later."

To me, this was the voice of the disinterested. It is logical to include the Water Companies in the R.W.A.'s on the grounds of standardisation, and many members of the public already think that we are part of Severn-Trent. Company employees, however, are not members of the public, viewing the situation from a position of non-involvement. We are directly affected.

What then do we want from our work? Security, friendly atmosphere, job satisfaction, promotion opportunity, etc., would feature in most peoples' thoughts with differing priorities no doubt. In my opinion there is little security risk whether we are amalgamated or not. S.T.W.A. use more staff to run an organisation the size of ours, than we do. The Company's friendly atmosphere and other benefits are illustrated by the significant number of former employees who return after only a short absence.

It all seems to me like a case of the grass being greener on the other side of the watershed, to coin a phrase. So why don't we show the Government that "small is beautiful" and that this Company enjoys good industrial relations, gets on with the job and does it economically. Let us support the Water Companies Association fight to remain independent.

By the way, in case you may be wondering whether I have been bribed by management to write this, I re-emphasise that this is purely my view. If you agree or disagree with anything I have said, write to your magazine and we could start an interesting debate.

PETER DODDS, *Editor*

Waterless '76

At the recent exhibition for water-recreation and industry at the National Agricultural Centre, Stoneleigh, none of the top brains present could make it rain. The Company's own top brains have been involved recently in a series of "think tank" meetings, in an endeavour to find ways to reduce the demand on the depleted Blithfield reservoir, now only 50% full.

The use of newly commissioned Walsall Booster station and a new look at the functions of pumping stations and distribution systems has enabled several different possibilities to be explored. Whilst the Company is relatively secure in its supplies at present, we shall at least have something up our sleeves.

Cawney Hill

A burst main at Cawney Hill reservoir was recently unearthed (literally) by removing several thousand tons of the embankment from one side of Cawney Hill Nr. 2 reservoir. A previously forgotten brick culvert surrounded the main, 20' below the ground. Beneath this culvert, the main was found to have settled as much as 10 to 12 inches, pulling out the lead joint shown in the photo and causing the leak.



Discovery of the leak solved a major mystery. Both reservoirs slowly emptied when shut off and yet no leaks were found in the structures.

DUDLEY CANAL TRIP

On Wednesday, 26th May, members and friends of the Staff Association had a candle lit supper and trip through Dudley Canal Tunnel. The journey into the tunnel, the longest in Britain, began with a high and wide "improved" section, soon to be followed by the very lowest and narrowest section. The boat scraped the sides and one could easily touch the top of the ancient brick arch.

After we traversed three short rocky caverns hewn out by the original tunnellers, we had an excellent light supper, lit by candles placed at intervals along the boat. The boat drifted along through the silence punctuated only by the chatter of passengers and the occasional "plop" of drips from the roof.



Following supper a number of us tried the ancient art of "legging," lying across the boat on a plank, walking on the tunnel walls to move the boat forward, as did the boatmen of old with the coal boats.

It was like a forgotten world, the undisturbed quiet of the basins, the cliff sides towering above and the silent electric boat threading its way through tunnels, towards the everyday world of cars, pub and souvenir selling.

So you think you live in an age of great change?

Having read the life of George III the thing which struck me most of all was the number of household names and great events which occurred during his reign, which spanned 60 years from 1760 to 1820. Horace Walpole was writing. Turner was painting. Handel was composing. Chippendale and Hepplewhite were designing and making furniture. Nelson was defeating Napoleon. William Pitt and his son led successive governments. Louis XVI went to the guillotine. Clive conquered India. Wellington was victorious. Wordsworth was nodding at daffodils and George Washington became the first President of the United States.

The period was littered with momentous events. The Peace of Paris ended the Seven Years War. The Stamp Act started the great "No taxation without representation" row with the American colonies which led, through the Boston Tea Riots, Lexington and Bunkers Hill to the declaration of independence. We were at war with France, Spain and Holland. The Bastille fell and the battle of Trafalgar was fought.

The era was also one of vast development. Mechanisation achieved by the exploitation of coal, iron and steam changed the face of the country. Macadam built his roads and Telford was constructing canals. The population of England rose from 7 to 12 millions and agricultural enclosure got under way.

During this time George and his wife, Charlotte of Mecklenberg raised a family of 15 children. He was eventually loved by his subjects for his domesticity, generosity and courage and perhaps the greatest monument to him is the Royal Academy of Arts which he founded in 1768. He died in 1820 having been permanently mad for the last 10 years of his life.

PETER THOMAS

HELLO CAMPERS !

My family and myself are now amongst the thousands of people converted to camping holidays. We began five years ago trying out a friend's tent before we took the plunge and invested in our own equipment.

At first we bought only a frame tent and the bare necessities such as gas cooker and bottle, chairs, table, light and wind-break, as at that time we only had a Morris 1100 with roof rack.

The following year I placed a Wanted Ad in the local paper and after dozens of replies bought a trailer for £25. Once with a trailer and plenty of space you find yourself purchasing other items such as hanging larders and ice boxes.

We now go camping several times a year. Of the sites we can recommend our favourite is on Shell Island where tents must be spaced 30 yards apart. Then there is Whitewell Farm at Tenby and also Sea Barn farm at Weymouth.

JOHN BENTLEY

Michael Geraghty's Feat

One Sunday in February, Michael of Revenue Department, went on a sponsored walk along the canal towpath from Ladywood Middleway to Kings Norton and back, a distance of 14 miles and thereby raised £12.00.

The walk was organised by Birmingham Young Volunteers, a group which provides help for Senior Citizens. Half the money raised was donated to "Highball" to provide holidays for deprived children.

Liquid refreshment was allowed and Michael appears to have done 2 to 3 miles to the pint. However, as it was all in a very worthy cause, Michael is to be complimented on his effort.

ALF HILL

Squash Ladder

A Squash Ladder has recently been formed, and is now operating with 26 players. Two squash courts have been booked for 8th July (5 p.m. to 7 p.m.) at Birmingham University, and hopefully this will become a permanent, twice monthly fixture; forty minutes of this time is reserved to introduce beginners to the game.

Information is available on the main notice board or from Brian Greenwood, NWD.

LOCK UP TIME AT WOOD GREEN

(with apologies to Alan Lander)

Clocking off is one mad flight,
of course they've forgotten the light.
Lock 'em up.

Stinking milk bottle on the sill,
ready to walk of its own free will.
Lock 'em up.

Through the shops I walk around,
skillful to avoid the littered ground.
Lock 'em up.

Swarf clogged machines left all night
illuminated by another left on light.
Lock 'em up.

"Tidy up" you told that man,
it's still like Steptoe's, in his van.
Lock 'em up.

"Close that door" I've said and said,
it's no use — he's got an empty head.
Lock 'em up.

'Tis no use unless you shout,
again he's left that bar sticking out.
Lock 'em up.

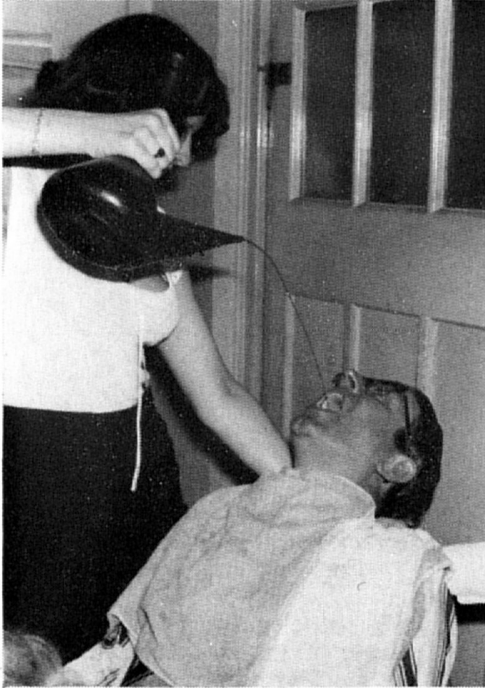
The office is very, very hot,
that lad again the radiator forgot.
Lock 'em up.

Last door locked, nice and tidy,
they're a grand lot but it's good it's Friday.
Lock 'em up.

ANON.

SPANISH

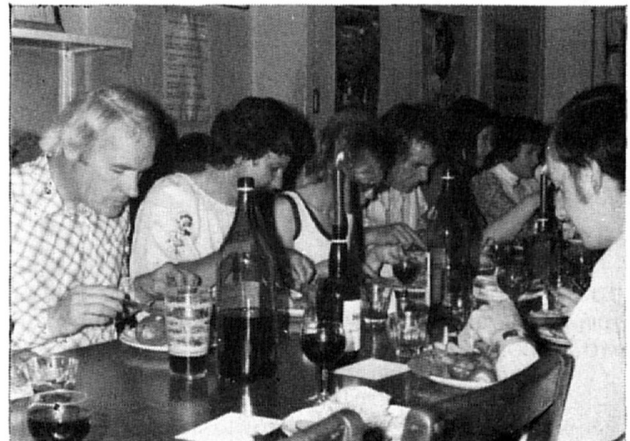
On Friday, 7th May a highly successful social
It was one of the best attended events of recent ti
and enjoyed themselves.



From about 7.30 the wine flowed and flowed
and then flowed some more. Following large
helpings of a tasty chicken meal the assembled host



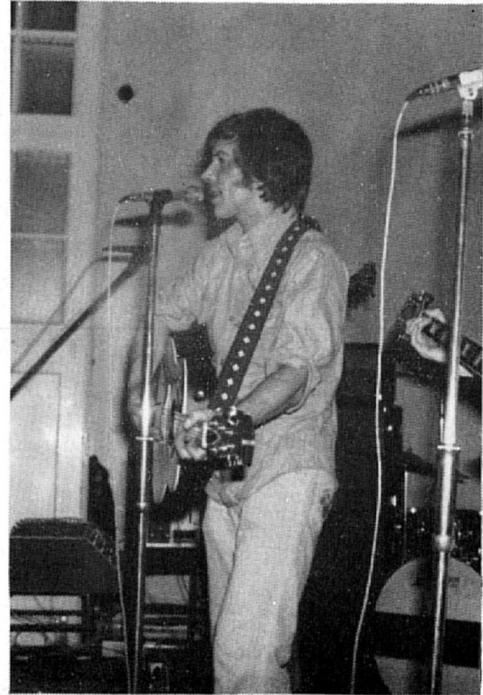
After an evening of ear bending music, the wine stopped
they all went home. All except the brave few who stayed



EVENING

function was held in the Head Office canteen.
nes. Everyone who came thoroughly relaxed

was entertained by a well known band of minstrels,
supplemented by thunder and lightening from a
storm outside.



flowing and the last waltz was played at 11.45, and
o clear up.

Thanks are expressed to John Wilson for his
efforts in re-erecting the pen and admiration for
his self-control when he trapped his fingers, also to
Don Alderson and Jim Land for their assistance
and for refraining from laughter at John's agony.

Gratitude too is expressed to the catering staff
and valiant servers and not least to the group and
organisers. Well done John Morrall.

ALBERT CHARLES



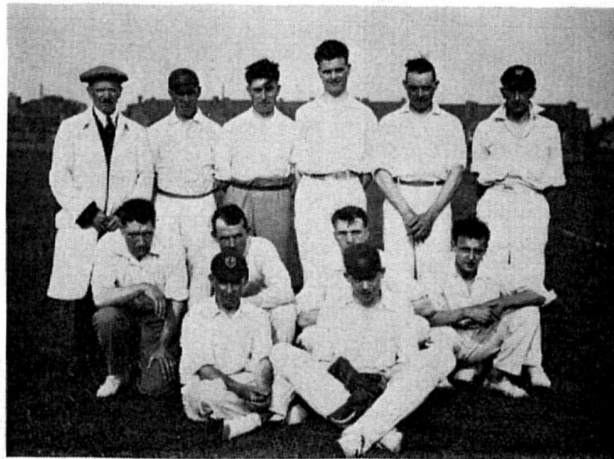
Who's Who at the Former Sutton Depot?

Thank you Gerry Prendergast, Superintendent in charge of mainlaying at Walsall area office, for putting names to the faces in the old photo of Sutton Depot sent in by B. C. Moulton (April issue).
1936 LINE UP (left to right)



Back row: W. Wade (Trenchman), E. Wallen (Trenchman), F. Humpherson (Plumber), A. Clarke (Plumber), C. Pickerill (Trenchman). *Centre row:* W. Wallington (Turncock), H. Hindley (Driver), A. Roberts (Waste Inspector), A. Hollowood (Waste Inspector), T. Henney (Turncock), H. Grimley (Waste Inspector). *Front row:* S. Moulton (Chief Waste Inspector), K. Gray (Chief Clerk), F. Shelton (Office Boy), M. Boden (Superintendent), S. Wimbush (District Inspector), A. Hurst (Turncock), E. Hendley (Fittings Inspector).

The photo below was sent in by David Coldicott, perhaps it will jog someone else's memory.



COMPETITION

Gremlins got at the competition again and sneaked an un-deliberate mistake into the anagrams. Jackie Ingram (Revenue) spotted it and sent in the correct answers. Hers was the first envelope opened — all the entries were correct, in fact. It was too easy, wasn't it? The right answers were:

Hand try	=	hydrant
Tan in murk	=	trunk main
Men at war	=	waterman
(S) tares	=	rates
New parties cost	=	waste inspector
Pats post	=	stop taps
Stub piper	=	burst pipe
River sore	=	reservoir
Corn muse	=	consumer
Pints in a pot mug	=	pumping station

In the poem below one word from each line will make a very familiar phrase to all South Staffs. employees. A bit harder this one.

DROUGHT

A dust cloud on the burning road
 Came slowly slowly from the south
 Staff-straight the thirsty company strode
 By dried up lake, ford and river's bed.

In shrivelled shire no life, just heat
 From stream and pool all water gone
 The earth baked dead; their works complete
 This company of valiant men had won.

As usual a £5 prize will be awarded to the first correct entry opened on 9th August.

JUST TO BE SAT ON !

People often say they don't like horses, but I'll bet they have never been riding.

Each horse has a personality of its own, some are affectionate others aren't, some are easy to manage while others are more difficult.

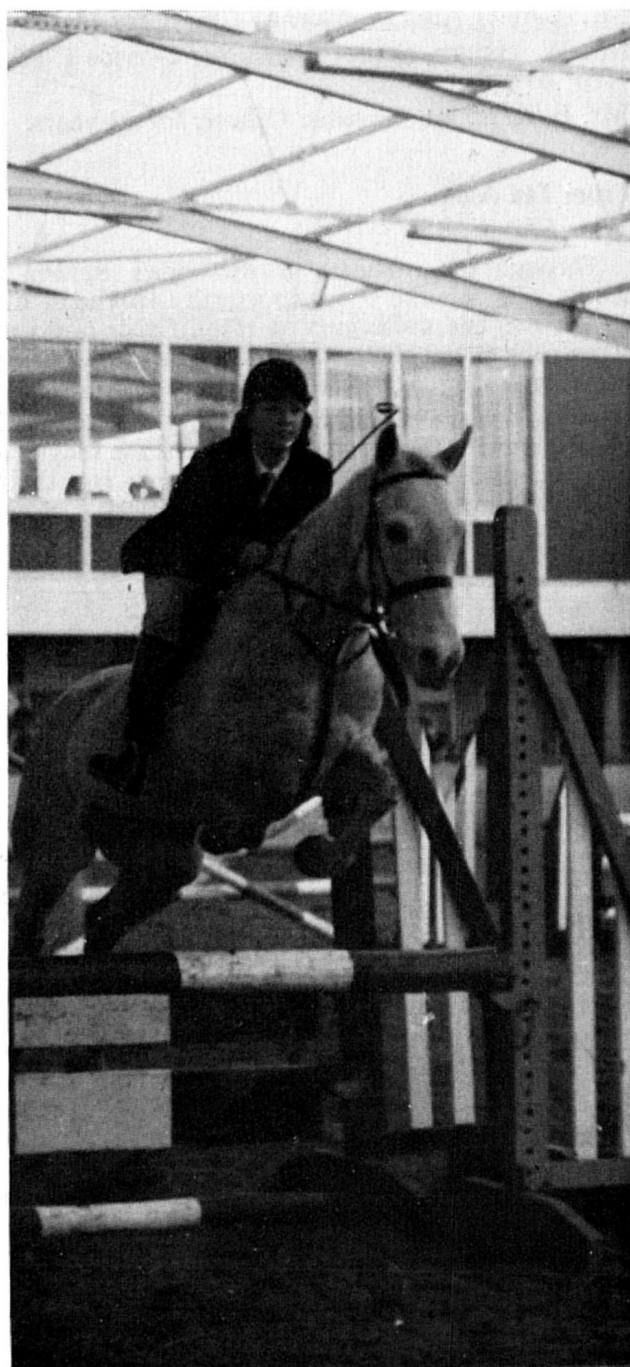
It is the expense involved which prices many would be enthusiasts out of owning a horse. Not only does the horse have to be cared for every day but the rider must be clothed properly too.

Once you have acquired your trusty steed the fun begins. Months of painstaking conditioning and preparation are needed. The effort and sheer hard work begin to make you wonder whether it is all worthwhile. However, your patience, effort and understanding will be rewarded and time and care will prevail. Gradually you learn to work together, though sadly at the expense of many bruises and a sore beam end!

Then, at last, the thrill of your first show. You get up at some unearthly hour of the morning to work up that special shine on the horse's coat. All the effort may be rewarded with a rosette pinned to your browband. Then pride fills your heart and you know real achievement. You feel the companionship of the horse beneath you, knowing that he understands every little movement or word of encouragement.

We all want to follow the example of the Harvey Smiths and Lester Piggotts of this world, not head first we hope, but even they've had their share of troubles. Well-to-do people reckon that for each 10 times you fall, you hurt yourself once, but there is always that exception to the rule, and that seems to be me. Every time I've fallen off a horse I have hurt myself, such as in the cross-country event. My horse hit a fence, hard, and we both fell on the landing side, she on top of me. She got up and ran off up the hill. Yvonne my stable mate, caught my pony, Grace, pulled me to my feet and put me back up and made me carry on. I cursed her then, when my face was throbbing with the pain that had suddenly hit me, but if she had not made me get on I would probably never have ridden again. When I had finished the course the St. John's Ambulance men found that I had a broken nose.

That is the black side though! On the whole horse riding is great fun, lovely countryside and fresh air.



One thing that never fails to make me smile though, is to see a little child on a dozy little pony, legs flapping and arms going like windmills, almost in tears of desperation, while the pony stands half asleep, in a world of its own.

SUE WARREN

SPECIAL LONG SERVICE

Awards and Congratulations go to:
Mr. E. Jones, Area Engineer at Tipton, for 48 years.
Mr. W. Hunter, Senior Consumer Service Clerk,
for 43 years.
Mr. F. R. Smith, Revenue Officer, for 42 years.

From Ted Jones

Dear Editor,

Through the medium of the *News Review* I would like to take the opportunity to thank all my friends and colleagues at Head Office and the Area Offices for their kindness shown to me on the occasion of my retirement.

In particular I would like to thank the staff and work-people at Tipton Area Office for the magnificent present of garden furniture also for their co-operation and loyalty over many years.

I thank you all.

Yours sincerely,

E. JONES

6 Woodcroft Avenue, Tipton, West Midlands.

Pension Fund News

South Staffs. Waterworks Superannuation Fund

The benefit statement issued, to all members of the Company's fund, in June promoted some interesting discussion, comments and questions and it is hoped that the following points may contribute to the general understanding of the information.

Normal retirement date is the earliest date on which you can retire and take your benefits on 1/80th for each year of pensionable service.

Item 5.1 on page 10 of the Member's Handbook defines it as "your 60th birthday provided at that time you have completed 25 years service with the Company. Otherwise it is the date on which you complete 25 years service or your 65th birthday, whichever is the earlier."

For the purpose of calculating the benefits this is the date that has been used but it does not imply that the Company requires the member to retire if the date is before his/her 65th birthday. The option to retire between the given date and the 65th birthday lies with the individual member.

Water Companies' Association Pension Scheme

As this scheme is not administered by the Company it is regretted that it has not been possible to issue benefit statements as yet but enquiries are being made to see if they can be obtained from the administrators of the scheme.

R. G. CLARKE

RETIREMENTS

BILL BROMLEY, maintenance operative,
at Cannock, on 31st March.
LEN PARSONS, trenchman,
at Tipton, on 6th May.
BILL WELLINGS, waste inspector,
at Tipton, on 31st May.
ERNIE GOODALL, estate hand,
at Blithfield, on 14th June.
ARTHUR TWIGG, senior wages clerk,
at Birmingham, on 17th June.
BILL HUNTER, senior consumer service clerk,
at Birmingham, on 30th June.
TED JONES, area engineer,
at Tipton, on 30th June.
RON SMITH, revenue officer,
at Birmingham, on 30th June.
MAURICE HACKETT, centre lathe turner,
at Wood Green, on 19th July.

We wish you all a long and happy retirement.

Retirement — A Full Time Job!

Except for the privileged few, how many have wondered how to fill an eight hour day without working? Not until the 49th of my 50 working years did I give it a thought.

Once I retired I still had Walsall depot to visit once a week, union work to do and friends to meet but that still left 4 days free. Then a friend suggested I drive once a fortnight for the W.R.V.S. My immediate answer was far from complimentary. W.R.V.S. is for women or so I thought, but thanks to a visit from an enthusiastic member of the service I decided to give it a go.

From once a fortnight it soon became once a week and now twice a week. The work involves far more than delivering meals. Collecting assorted gifts of clothing and books, distributing them to the old and needy, providing a home library service for the house-bound and being head cook and bottle washer are all part of the service.

Perhaps the best thing to come out of the work is the new social circle. The W.R.V.S. looks after its own as well as the people it serves. Even the wife is involved now, it is infectious once you start.

On reflection perhaps I am one of the privileged few!

LES MORRALL

GOLD WATCHES

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

RON GROOM, mainlaying inspector, at Walsall.

CLIFF HARRIS, foreman, at Springsmire.

JOAN DALE, cleaner, at Walsall.

BRIAN ARBLASTER, assistant chief waste inspector, at Walsall.

LAURY JONES, centre lathe turner, at Wood Green.

WELCOME

to the newcomers who have joined us since March.

Burton:

John Stone — trenchman.

Cannock:

Barry Jones — trenchman.

Hampton Loade:

Frank Malins — fitter.

Head Office:

Barbara Allen — cleaner.

Robin Comley — assistant electrical engineer.

Pam Evans — clerical assistant.

Brian Greenwood — junior engineering assistant.

Roger Miller — clerical assistant.

Edna Read — cook.

Anne Scrivener — clerical assistant.

Tipton:

Graham Brown — trenchman.

Robert Elwood — trenchman.

Philip Hammond — trainee waterworks operative.

Peter Roberts — trenchman.

Nigel Thurstans — trainee waterworks operative.

Transport:

Matthew Cannavan — clerical assistant.

Walsall:

Ken Bowater — trenchman.

Robert Clives — trainee waterworks operative.

Terry Goodier — trenchman.

Tony Griffiths — trainee waterworks operative.

Clive Wilkes — trainee waterworks operative.

Wood Green:

Stan Moore — labourer.

Stephen Russel — work study assistant.

Visit to Harlow Car Gardens at Harrogate

The Secretary of the Staff Association and his helpers are to be congratulated upon the arrangements made for the very successful visit to Harrogate on 9th May.

We experienced quite heavy showers on both journeys, but the periods spent in the famous gardens and around the town itself were fine and at times we enjoyed warm sunshine.

The timing of the visit was good in so far as there was a splendid show of colour from the numerous island beds, the broad walk, heath and new rose gardens, the landstone rock garden and peat beds and terraces. In the stream garden there was a beautiful display of yellow and white varieties of *Lysichitum*.

We were unfortunately a little too early in the year to enjoy to the full the old fashioned rose borders.

A break at Harrogate on our return journey enabled us to get tea and wander around the town or visit the city's gardens according to individual whim. A speedy and safe return journey completed a very pleasant outing.

This is the second such visit, in 1975 we went to Wisley. Both have been a great success and I am sure that all who attended hope that equally attractive venues will be found for the future.

RICHARD CHAMBERLAIN

Spa-Trek

Captain James T. Birk of the Spa-ship Rent-a-prize leaned down on to the planet's surface with his first officer Smock. They were carrying out a search for water since their photon-integrator had started playing up and was producing hydrogen peroxide. White-haired and tight lipped, Captain Birk stood reading the notice on the building. "Heaven-sent Water Authority, Lemmington division." The rat in the office stood up and held up his hand: "You are James T. Birk, etc., etc. (the usual intro.) and we have'nt got any water" — try the other lot in Sleepwalk Street." Birk did, and intergalactic co-operation was wondrous to behold. He was given all he needed and more. As he left, the people gave him gifts of hosepipes, automatic washing machines and sprinkles. On his return to the Rent-a-prize he was greeted by Spottie, the Chief Engineer. "Captain," said Spottie, "Did ye see them! They were washing in whisky! Its sacrilege." "Well," smiled Birk, "the notice on the door said 'supplies are adequate' . . . Warp factor 2 Mr. Zulu!"

SPORTS REVIEW

Since the last issue the netball team have joined Dudley Summer League and are doing quite well. We have played 8 matches, won 4, lost 3 and drawn 1.

As we are now playing more in the area where most of you live, what about some support? We are going to post the fixtures on the notice boards.

A dance has been held by the netball and football teams on the 14th July, in Martin's Room at the Opposite Lock.

We are still looking for a new name for the team, so please send any suggestions to me in Admin. Dept. at Head Office.

SUE WARREN

WANTED URGENTLY

Players for 1976/77 season:
S.S.W.W. F.C.: Bloxwich Combination.
Div. I, Sat. Section.

All interested please contact:
J. Morrall, Admin. Head Office. Training starts late July.

The closing of the 1975/76 season saw the team just holding its own in the 1st Division of the league. As this was our first full season in the top division, the players were quite pleased at the progress made. Perhaps our league position will improve once we have become accustomed to our new status.

The highlight of the season would have been the final of the Billy Nichols Shield competition, if we had won it. But on the night the team's overall performance was much below standard and Bentley F.C. held on to a 3-1 result.

Once again our thanks to Mr. Wallis for supporting our efforts (certain referees would say too enthusiastically!) and we hope once again that he will be in attendance next season.

JOHN MORRALL

Black Country Olympics

Four teams of men, boys and girls converged on the Leasows sports centre to contest the 1976 Judo section of the games.

Each team was split into weight categories which meant that each fighter fought a person of his or her own weight.

The teams competing comprised members selected from clubs in Sandwell, Dudley, Wolverhampton and Walsall.

Dudley team were blessed with my presence and I was to fight in two sections; the under green belt and the under brown belt categories. Unfortunately in both sections I was fighting out of my class.

In the under green belt I fought in the 13 stone and over class but, as I am only just 13 stone this meant that I was the lightest in the section and I fought men of 14 to 16 stone. Anyway I won a couple of my fights against the large men — well you have to have a go don't you! Even in the under brown belt I went out and had a good tussle with the more experienced men.

All in all this event gave young fighters the essential competitive experience that cannot be gained by club practice alone.

Results: 1st Sandwell, 2nd Wolverhampton, 3rd Dudley and 4th Walsall.

COLIN LEAPER

Hawaiian Eye-ful

Lovely Maureen Griffin from Tracers got married on Saturday 24th. She is seen here at her board, prior to celebrating with her friends before the happy day.

