

News Review

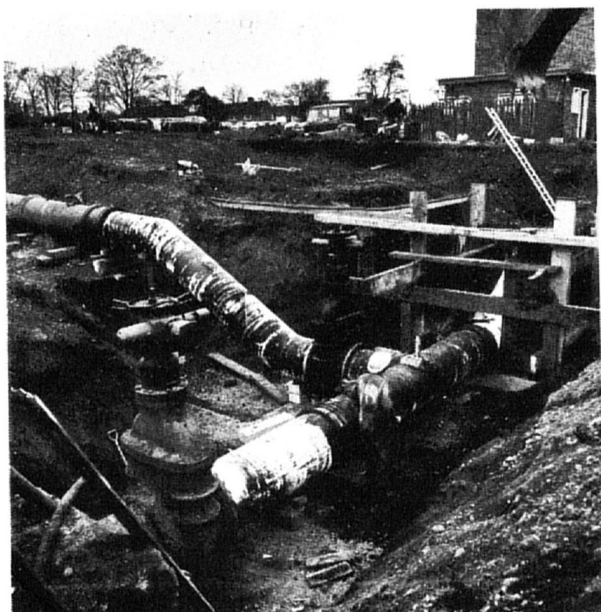
105

of the South Staffordshire Waterworks Company

DECEMBER 1976



OUR COVER



**West Bromwich Booster Connections currently being constructed.
The man in the hat is ganger Johnny Mayer from Walsall Area Office.**

SO WHAT NEXT ?

On Thursday, 25th November, the Queen re-opened Parliament in the traditional manner. The event had more than usual significance for we common people here at South Staffs., for Her Majesty's speech contained the following paragraph:

"Legislation will be introduced to provide for greater equality in average charges for unmeasured water supply between different water authorities in England and Wales. Proposals will be brought before you for strengthening the national organisation of the water industry."

So far there has been virtually no official clarification of exactly what this means to the Water Companies. With the exception of one rather premature forecast from the Daily Telegraph, the press has said little, preferring, perhaps, to wait until the White Paper is published early next year. Mr. Dennis Howell is quoted in Hansard, the official record of Parliamentary business, on 15th November (**before** the Queen's speech) saying "I am at present studying responses to the Consultative Document (the Green Paper published earlier this year recommending take-over of the Water Companies among other things) and will take them into account when drawing up plans to implement the Government's proposals."

So — in fact there is little news at present. The Government will show its hand early next year in the White Paper, which will set out the final proposals. 'Til then we shall have to wait and see.

IN THIS ISSUE

Features :—

SANDFIELDS LABORATORIES
BULK CHLORINE INSTALLATION
BOATBUILDING the WILMOT WAY
MESSING ABOUT IN BOATS

Plus — News of the Social Club,
Football Team and our ever
popular Competition.

News Review

December 1976.

The Magazine of the South Staffordshire Waterworks Company

Editor: PETER DODDS; **Assistant Editor:** BRON THURSTON; **Secretary:** YVONNE ELSDON
Photography: GRAHAM WATKINS; **Sport and Social Events:** JOHN MORRALL
Secretary's Department: JACK BILLINGHAM; **Illustrator and Cartoonist:** PETE BOSLEY

The Editor is always pleased to receive articles on any subjects, etc. However, the right is reserved to adjust material received to fit the space available.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Everyone will be only too well aware that the unprecedented low rainfall during 1975/76 caused a national water shortage and the Company's supplies from the River Severn and Blythe were depleted for a considerable time.

This emergency made exceptional demands on personnel at all levels and those concerned rose to the challenge with determination and enthusiasm. Many volunteered and gave up their evenings and weekends to assist in essential operational duties and to help to mount the Company's publicity campaign seeking the co-operation of consumers for economy in the use of water.

As a result of such untiring efforts it was possible to maintain essential supplies throughout the Company's area of supply and I am most grateful to everyone concerned.

I hope you all have a very happy Christmas.

CHARLES BURMAN
6th December 1976

COMMENT

As you know, our October issue was a bumper 16 pages, and we didn't expect to have so much material for one issue again for a long time. However, here we are with another 16 page issue and some contributors will be disappointed to find that their masterpieces have not been included. We can't increase the size of the magazine any more because of cost and demands on the editorial team, for whom life gets fairly hectic anyway as Press date draws near. I didn't expect to see the comment "lack of space prevents publication of . . ." but it is quite true. In a way this is pleasing because it is further proof of the increasing popularity of the magazine. I guarantee that the items held over will be included next time, with the exception of competitions. I have received enough good suggestions for the competition to last until Christmas next year! Budding Competition writers, please try your hand at something else.

Readers have responded to my plea for items from departments that hitherto we have not heard from, and this issue contains items from Admin, New Works, Sanfields, Wood Green and Revenue. Thank you everyone.

We live in a democratic Society, and consequently it is very pleasing to witness democracy actually working, however shakily. Elsewhere in this issue, Mr. Mark-

ham, Chairman of the Social Club, has summarised the Special General Meeting of the Staff Association Club which was held to propose a change in the rules and objects of the Club. It is hoped that the Club will be able to foster the expansion of social activities throughout the Company, and the News Review fully supports these proposals and will play its part through its pages.

These days, many people find the distinction between staff and employees only a matter of how often one is paid. The distinctions between white collar workers and so-called blue collar workers in this Company are artificial and belong to a less enlightened age. It was a matter of some disappointment therefore to a vocal minority at the Special General Meeting that the new rules were adopted, since membership of the Social Club is still open only to staff, i.e., the monthly paid.

We, on the News Review, are pleased to associate ourselves with the minority as one of our policies is to embrace the interests of all Company employees, however often they are paid. It is only a matter of time, I believe, before a motion to enable all employees to join The Social Club is firmly carried by the existing membership.

Certainly at Christmas time, I'm sure we all wish each other seasonal greetings, and we would all like to be paid more often!

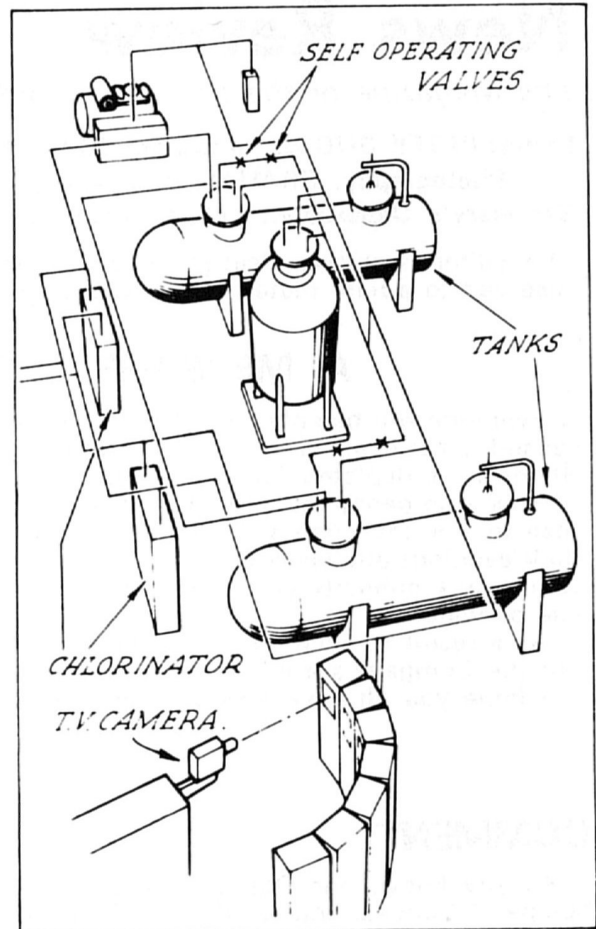
BULK CHLORINE STORE AT HAMPTON LOADE

Readers will be aware of the importance to the Company of Hampton Loade Treatment Works and may be interested to know that the plant is now able to treat up to 60 million gallons of water a day. Chemical handling and dosing, and in particular chlorine handling, at that sort of output needs very careful consideration. Up to 500 tons of chlorine will be needed each year when the plant is running at maximum output. In order to cope with this quantity of chlorine, a new plant has recently been commissioned at Hampton Loade, designed for modern, economical and safe handling of the chemical. At most of the Company's treatment plants the chlorine is currently delivered in large yellow painted drums in various sizes up to 1 ton capacity. These can be satisfactorily employed up to a certain output from the plant. Beyond this point bulk liquid handling becomes safer and more economical.

Chlorine is supplied to large users such as the Company in bulk liquid form and is delivered in 19 ton road tankers. The Company's new plant comprises a brick and concrete building holding 2, 30 ton steel vessels, 2 evaporators to warm the liquid from the tanks and convert it into gas. The gas is then passed to chlorinators for treating the processed water on the works by injection at appropriate points in the mains system. Chlorine can be extremely dangerous if carelessly handled. Therefore, complex ancillary preparations and stringent safety arrangements, including television monitoring of instruments, are incorporated into the design which was carried out under the supervision of the Company's Engineers to the highest standards.



The Chlorine Storage Tanks.



Diagrammatic Layout of Installation.

During the development stages, therefore, there was always an inherent emphasis on safety. A Company safety group was set up to look at all aspects of the design comprising representatives from New Works, the Chemists, Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and the man with the closest interest of all (literally) Ron Pangborn, Hampton Loade Superintendent. As a result of their studies, safety measures such as automatic valve closing, alarm sounding and gas extractor fan operation were incorporated; all to be started by signals from chlorine leak detectors in the building.

The photograph gives some idea of the complexity of the plant but for all that, we consider it is the safest and best engineered bulk chlorine installation in the country, a view endorsed by the Health and Safety Inspectorate.

At the time of writing, the first delivery of bulk chlorine from Stavelly Chemicals is imminent.

TONY JOWLE

CHANGES TO THE STAFF ASSOCIATION CLUB

A Special General Meeting of the Staff Association Club was held in the Head Office Canteen on 10th November, attended by about 23 members, at which the two resolutions approved by Members signify a strengthening of social and sporting activities within the Company.

The first resolution altered the name to The South Staffordshire Waterworks Company Social Club on account of the relinquishing of former duties related to the negotiation of conditions of employment and the educational training of members and the placing of greater emphasis on the provision of recreational activities.

The second resolution extended the responsibilities of the Club to encourage and initiate as necessary, social and sporting activities throughout the Company. This will be done through a new Co-ordination Committee comprising the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Entertainments Secretary of the Social Club together, by invitation, with the Chairmen and Honorary Secretaries of all other social and sporting clubs in the Company. It is envisaged that the new Committee will, through its corporate strength, give coherence and added vigour to all social activities and make recommendations, if appropriate, to Top Management for financial or other support.

Other changes of a minor nature included the raising of annual subscriptions to £1.00 for staff at Head Office and 75p for district staff.

Before the new Rules were approved, divergent views were expressed on the timing of offering membership to all employees. It was explained, on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Social Club, that a gradual approach was favoured to take account of the views of the members opposed to it but that, in the meantime, the operations of the Co-ordination Committee would help to bridge the gap; attention was drawn to the increased number of events in which all employees would be able to participate.

Some members urged immediate admittance of all employees to the Social Club citing the need to remove an unnecessary division between monthly and weekly paid employees.

The Chairman stated that the Committee was sympathetic to the idea and felt that the majority of members might decide to accept it in due course.

The second resolution was finally approved by 14 votes to 8.

The first meeting of the Co-ordination Committee was held on 23rd November at Walsall.

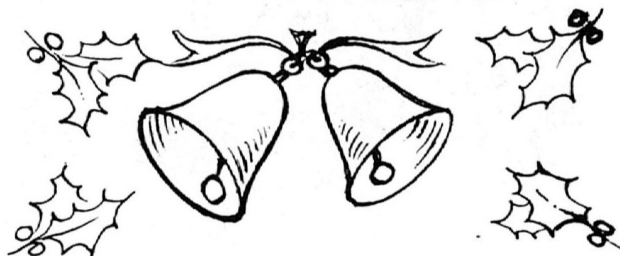
OFFICERS OF THE SOCIAL CLUB

Chairman	W. A. MARKHAM
Vice-Chairman	ALLAN EVERS
Honorary Secretary	JOHN H. DIXON
Honorary Treasurer	MICHAEL J. ANDREWS
Honorary Entertainments Sec.	JOHN MORRALL
	W. A. MARKHAM

THE ARCHIVES

Up in the Archives there's files galore,
Files on the shelves and files on the floor,
All stuck together in nice tidy heaps,
I think I'll be seeing these files in my sleep.
Files all dusty and tied up with tape,
Files so heavy they make your arms ache,
Files so old that the title has gone,
You seize it with joy, but it's never the one.
Files with long titles and some that are
short,
Patiently, carefully, we hopefully sort,
Is it the blue one, or maybe the pink,
Oh no, it's not either, the dust makes me
blink.
Think of the people who did all the work,
Carry on searching, don't ever shirk.
The people who wrote them are long dead
and gone,
But their files, like the words of a song,
linger on.
It's chastening to think that at some future
time,
The files they are all looking for could be
mine

PEGGY HARRIS



BAVARIAN EVENING

A small party from the South Staffs attended a Bavarian Evening held at the Civic Hall, Solihull on 6th November. Most people were seated at long tables running the length of the hall, whilst on stage was a brass band and singers appropriately dressed in 'Sound of Music' costumes. While the audience were getting into the right frame of mind for the evening by consuming tankards of lager served by numerous waitresses, the band played Strauss music interspersed with typical Bavarian songs.

It was easy to pinpoint people who had attended one of these evenings before as they were sporting their own tankards and anticipating things to come by swaying in time to the music. Then the band leader decided that it was time for some audience participation and everybody was soon swaying in their seats helped along by regulars who stood on the tables to urge on the newcomers.

The proceedings continued with the introduction of comedian Pat Tansey, a recent New Faces winner, who quickly had the audience in stitches. Pat was followed by the return of the band on stage and the serving of supper. By now things were beginning to warm up nicely, helped considerably by the lager leaving the waitresses' trays. The band continued with more music and singing including such delightful songs as "My Boyfriend plays in a German Band." At the end of the evening participation had become more vigorous, many people climbing onto the tables to stamp and clap.

Of the people who attended, there were mixed feelings ranging from my own slight disappointment (well, it wasn't heavy rock was it!) to "when's the next one?"

ANDY MEADOWS



BOAT BUILDING THE WILMOT WAY

It is difficult to recall when we actually decided to "do our own thing" and fit out our own boat. I have a suspicion that the idea had hovered in Andy's mind since his earlier dinghy sailing days. I seem to recall that he did mention that his interests revolved around cars in winter and boats for the rest of the year. Where do I fit in? At Andy's side no less, whether I be hanging on for grim life in his somewhat spartan racemobile or clinging deperately onto the sheets controlling genoa sails as I lean my frail — no sorry, truth will out — sturdy frame over the side of a fourteen foot dinghy in gale force winds.

Our exploits in the dinghy, and our graduation to a 27' Tumblaren yacht 'Blue Max' are all part of another story which ended when Blue Max was lost in a gale whilst at anchor.

We decided that to buy another boat already fitted out would be too expensive as boat prices were escalating. So we chose for our boat to be a Morgan Giles 30 foot cruiser racer. The M.G. has a slim design but it is very comfortably fitted out inside, sleeping up to six people at a pinch or five people and a dwarf with ease.

This was a great improvement on Blue Max as she would only sleep two dwarves at a pinch. (I still walk with a stoop !)



Andy Wilmot steering his dream boat accross the field!



Captain Willmott and his 30ft. sailing cruiser in the making.

Having estimated that it would take us three to four years from date of order to complete, we decided that our efforts would be well rewarded with a Willmott customized sailing boat and thus, operation Ganymede was put into practice.

The great day came when we brought the hull back from Somerset. What a nightmare. Travelling was limited to 30 miles an hour, crawling round tortuously twisted lanes, gathering columns of impatient cars behind. Added to this, we were in a smelly old Land Rover, infested with small eight-legged 'critturs' which come out to play at night. In addition to this, every time the vehicle started weaving across the road, I knew that Andy was sleeping and needed a rendering of any old Beatles numbers I could remember. Luckily my singing is raucous enough to keep anyone awake, and we arrived safely back (at our borrowed 'boat-yard') at approximately four in the morning. This was to be the M.G.'s resting place whilst we fitted her out.

The late summer of 1975 found Andrew and myself sampling the joys of working together. We weathered the initial crises of sliding about in the hollow shell, which was all that we started with, and began construction. Now Andy could not be expected to do everything, so we devised a plan

whereby he would be carpenter and I would resin bond the wood to the hull interior. Good idea? Yes, except that I had never done any glass fibre work before. The heat was so intense (over 100°F) that I had between 5 and 6 minutes to use each mix. We won't count the times that the brush became stuck inside the bowl of resin. Before long I got the hang of this bonding game and if I did swear occasionally when shoved into holes that were only big enough to accommodate a midget comfortably, well, it was all part of the fun.

Tempers in a confined space tend to get frayed as everyone knows. Ours were no exception. We worked from early morning to sunset to make the most of the good weather. So, not surprisingly, came the day when top management fell out with the employee. Putting up shelves in the main cabin was a complicated job, because in one hand I held the bowl of resin, whilst in the other I held the brush balancing meanwhile on the steep side of the hull. At this time we had no floor as such so I'd balanced the tub of resin behind me. Unfortunately I slipped on the shiny surface and slithered into the tub of resin. Andy uttered a shriek which would have done a tomcat credit and immediately set to work cleaning up me and the sticky mess I was sitting in. The floor was tacky for weeks.

I seem to remember that this was when Andrew lost his temper and broke the dust-pan and I threw tools all over the place and retired to sun-bathe.

From this point we found ourselves not to be compatible working partners, I would go on strike sun-bathing on deck, whilst Andy seethed within.

However, we stopped short of divorce and after a few months established a reasonable working relationship.

The major interior woodwork has now been completed, we even have our own porta-potti installed, which is quite sophisticated after the bucket and chuck it routine of the Tumlar.

We have come a long way on our project and it could have been ready for the 1977 sailing season with ease but now it won't be ready until 1978. The reason for this has the registration number 4004 NE, and does 0-60 in 5 seconds two up and is the smartest little Lotus 7 in town.

So perhaps you'll see us around in nice weather with our funny furry hats on, I've drawn the line at wearing crash helmets and goggles, although who knows by next year . . .

FRANCES WILLMOTT

In this issue we decided to feature Sandfield Laboratories, the guardians of the Company's water quality and a variety of other responsibilities.

In the early years (pre 1920) water was not treated prior to distribution, reliance was placed upon the quality of the source, be it underground or surface derived.

During the 1920's importance of water quality became increasingly recognised until in 1928 the first Chief Chemist to the Company, Mr. G. V. Hall, was appointed. "G.V." as he was affectionately known was a long and devoted servant of the Company retiring in 1968 after 39 years service. Sadly he died in 1971 after a long illness but he is still remembered by those that knew him as one of the S.S.W.W. characters.

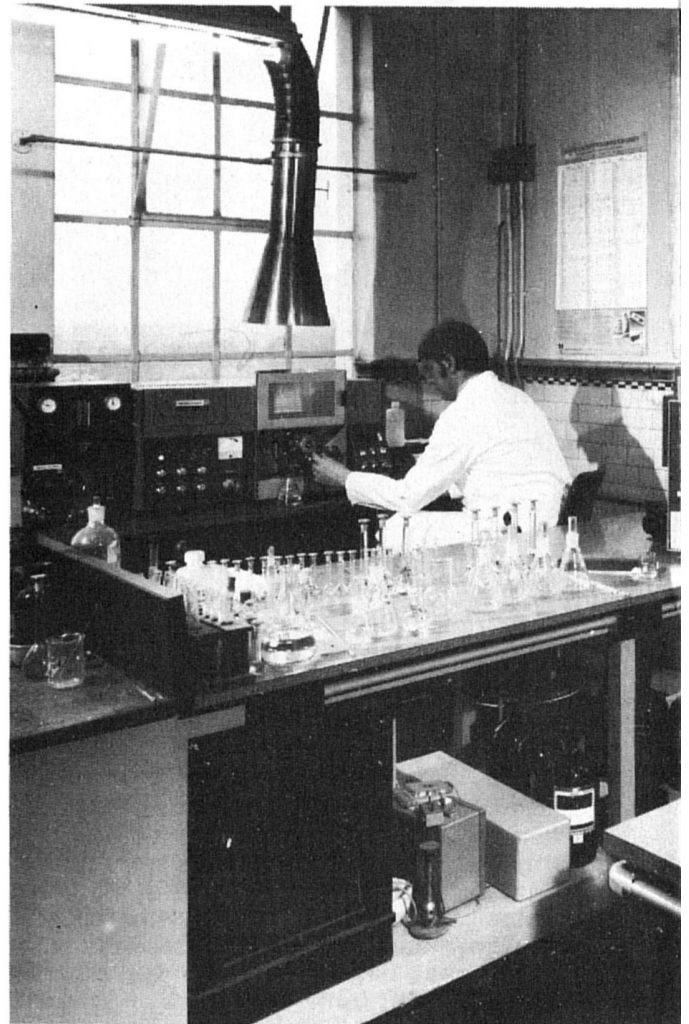
It is as true now as it was in the old days that great importance is placed on three of our human senses for water quality, i.e., taste, colour and odour. The acknowledged expert in this field is Paddy Dodd, who like a true connoisseur can recognise a Maple Brook from a River Severn, or a Chilcote from a River Blithe just by looking, smelling and tasting. ("Undoubtedly Chilcote '76 my dear fellow . . . a clear and fresh vintage — if a trace on the hard side".) Of course, there are more sophisticated methods of examining water for its quality, both bacteriologically and chemically. Each of the 40 samples taken daily from various points in the distribution system are analysed for evidence of bacteria (Pathogens) and trace chemicals.

Chlorination of water is now universal. To every drop of water for consumption is added a very small quantity of chlorine, an extremely powerful disinfectant but harmless and virtually, if not completely, tasteless to human beings. Samples of water are placed in a Petrie dish together with a



Donald Priestley, Assistant Chief Chemist

SANDFIELD

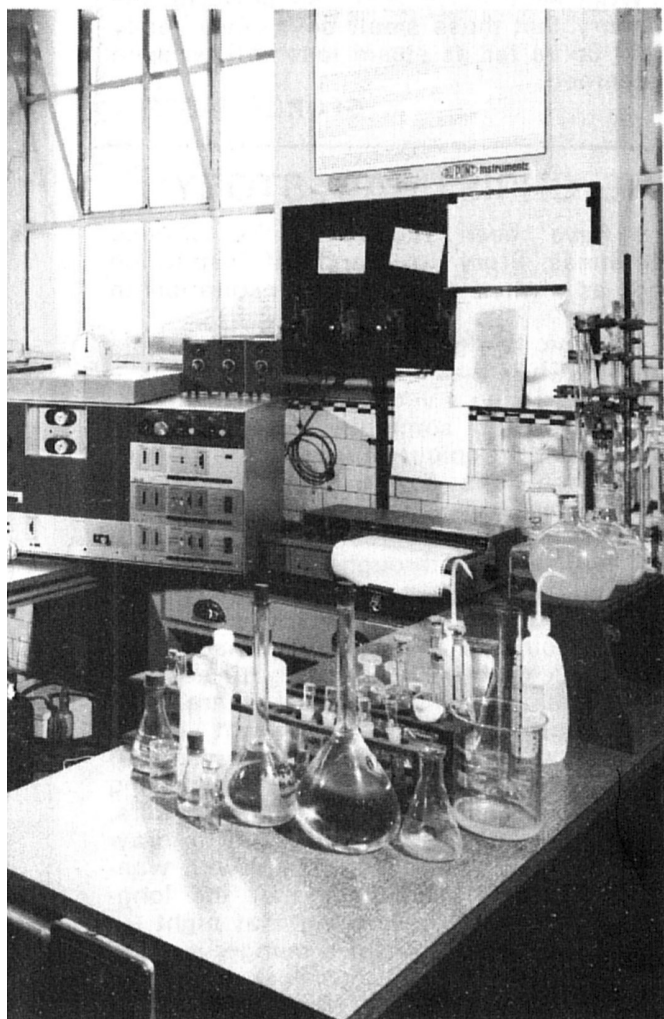


suitable food-rich media and incubated for several hours. If bacteria are present they will thrive and multiply and the sample is said to have "grown". Fortunately samples rarely "grow", which must prove something, if only that they don't like the food they are offered! It is a tribute to everyone involved with the water that so rarely does it contain any harmful bacteria.

Chemical analysis is done with the aid of modern instruments, including an atomic absorption spectro-photometer. This machine quickly analyses samples for traces of heavy metals, i.e. iron, copper, lead, etc., which are harmful in large amounts. The machine can detect one part in one million, million!

All results, whether bacteriological or chemical, are compared with standards laid down by the World Health Organisation's "European Standard for Water" to ensure that they conform to public health requirements.

LABORATORIES



The Laboratory also deals with non-routine sampling, for example after the chlorination of a new main to ensure that sterilisation is complete, or checking effluent from a pumping station not connected to the main sewer to see that there is no contamination risk. All paints destined for use inside service reservoirs must be checked for safety to health and the effect of pesticides on catchment areas is investigated where necessary. Water from suspected leaks is checked to see if it has in fact come from a burst main or from a ground water or flood source. The Laboratory also carries out investigations into the causes of fish disease in Blithfield and Chelmarsh; why, perhaps suddenly, the death rate among fish in the reservoirs rises, or catches are smaller. On top of all this work is the service to the consumer; the miscellany of complaints that need to be solved, some obvious and some not so obvious.



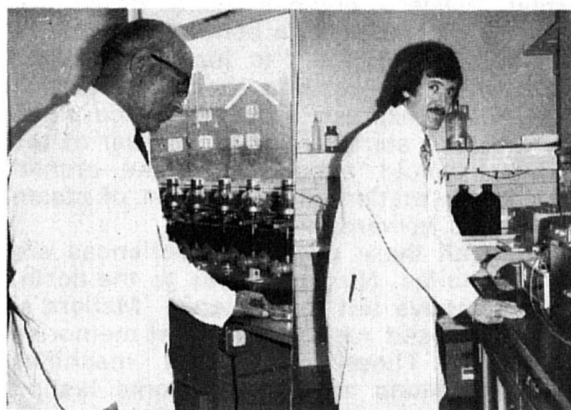
Frank Price at the controls of the atomic absorption spectro-photometer. The machine is easier to use than its name is to pronounce, he says.

"My water used to taste better than it does since a new factory was built down the road." Such a complaint can mean that water quality has improved with a new consumer added on to the main, but the person complaining has got used to the way it used to be.

"My aluminium kettle has got a hole in it after only three weeks use." This is generally an indication of the wrong aluminium alloy being used rather than any problem in the water . . . and so on. No-one has yet complained that their water tastes like beer so our service layers at Burton are either doing a good job or anyone getting beer through their taps isn't saying too much about it!

So when you raise your glass of "Severn seventy-seven" on New Years Day, remember that Sandfields passed it first!

SUE WARREN
GRAHAM WATKINS
PETER DODDS



Frank Crowe (left) looks after the biological samples, whilst Peter Hargreaves (right) uses a machine which automatically determines the presence of ammonia in a sample.

STEAM DREAM



George Eades.

It all started around about 1825 and ended in 1968, the age of the steam locomotive.

There were all sorts of engines, big ones, little ones, known by affectionate nicknames:— matchboxes, tater-roasters, crabs, streaks,

jubes and jinties. Then there were the aristocrats — Kings, Castles, Halls, Manors, Granges, Princesses — all noble looking machines capable of prodigious feats of haulage at times. Of the ones which carried names, there were some unusual ones, some grand ones and some rare ones. "Tre Pol and Pen", "Pershore Plum", "Flamingo", "Bucephalus", "Downside", "Agamemnon", "Pretty Polly", "Impala" . . . the range of names was vast, some of them named after famous racehorses. One of the names in the list is that of a racehorse. Can you spot it?

But they are no more, the snorting monsters which stirred the hearts and breathed out fire and smoke at night as they tore through the countryside.

The men who drove them were a race apart, they seemed like gods to small boys whose ambition was to be an engine driver. There is no doubt that they were artists in their job. To see a King leave Snow Hill Station for London with a load of 500 tons without the slightest hint of a slip was a marvellous sight. But the old Great Western engines were noted for their surefootedness. In contrast, the LNER Pacifics were prone "to lose their feet." And what an awesome spectacle when a northbound express tight on the curve of York Station started away! The roar of the exhaust would echo around the arched roof of the station as the column of steam thundered upwards.

Alas all these exciting experiences are but memories. No more races to the north, no locomotive left to challenge 'Mallard's' 126mph speed record. But what memories they are. These magnificent machines sweeping along at 85 mph, some lasting fifty years compared to fifteen of their modern counterparts, the diesels. There are no longer little boys peering on to footplates to see the fiery maw through the firebox hole, or the thrill of being taken on

to the footplate by some understanding driver.

What days those were; so powerful the memory that those small boys never really grew up as far as steam locomotives were concerned.

GEORGE EADES

THE CHRISTMAS STORY

I have been re-reading the original Christmas Story in search of inspiration and, as always, have found inspiration in it.

Imagine being one of the first people to 'find Christmas.' Imagine yourself as a shepherd, living a very humdrum existence, always wishing something would happen to you to add colour and meaning to your life. Then, one starlit night, when you least expect it, you are destined to play an important role in a real live melodrama that will live on through the ages.

First, you see a star behaving very oddly, and this causes much conjecture among you and the other shepherds and you speak of this phenomenon for a while. The night grows stranger — there is a mysterious singing and a light grows brighter and brighter. You are awed and uneasy and have a feeling that something is going to happen! An Angel appears, causing you and your companions to draw close to each other, speechless with wonder. The Angel tells you that the long-awaited Messiah is arriving that night — as a human boy, born in a manger — and that you are to leave your flock and go to Him. Just think! the Messiah needs a welcome to earth and YOU have been chosen as one to extend the welcome. You and the other shepherds set forth at once — hurry, hurry — follow the star! At last you come to Bethlehem, to the manger, and there is the babe, as the Angel said.

Such emotion fills your heart and mind and whole being! You will never be the same again. You bow down and worship silently. Others come with gifts. Finally, you quietly steal away, speaking not at all nor being spoken to. But you know that this is the high point in your life — nothing before, nothing after this night could ever be so important to you. Something finally did happen — and could you ever ask for more? You were one of the 'first people'.

We can never find Christmas as the shepherds did, pure and uncomplicated. But let us try to find it in our hearts again this year.

SARA STEVENS

"CHARLIE" JONES

On the 9th December this year, the familiar initials 'H.E.P.J.' at the tops of letters and reports will no longer appear.

After 43 years with the Company, Mr. H. E. P. Jones, known affectionately as 'Charlie', Section Leader in the Admin. Section of New Works Department, retires at a very youthful 60.

He commenced his career in the then Civil Engineering Department when he left school in 1933, and for many years now has been a cornerstone of the New Works Department.

It would appear that almost every development of the Company's source works has somewhere the initials H.E.P.J. on a letter or drawing connected with the Works from the River Blithe to the River Severn, including, in part, the Welsh Hills as far as Clywedog Reservoir.

The expertise and knowledge of the Company's works he has gained over this period has been invaluable, and particularly his involvement in the borehole sources. His knowledge on the legalistic side of the water industry is second to none and it is believed he can quote the Water Acts in his sleep!

The number of public inquiries he has prepared information for and attended, has been endless and his assistance to the Senior Officer giving evidence at such an inquiry would put any Barrister's Junior to shame.



One aspect of his work over the years has been the vetting of planning applications and reporting back to the Planning Authorities in the Company's area, ensuring that no development takes place which is likely to pollute the Company's underground and surface water sources — a very good watchdog on pollution prevention.

Mr. Jones, who is meticulous in everything he does, also has a reputation for writing the most excellent letters and reports. When asked how he developed this expertise, he explained that this had resulted from previous Chief Engineers constantly returning his work for improvement and correction.

In his youth, he was a keen cyclist, but now concentrates on the more leisurely but still demanding pursuit of walking, mainly in Wales.

Over the past 43 years he has seen the coming and going of four Chief Engineers and eight New Works Engineers, and no doubt he has tales to tell about each and everyone of them.

The Company has changed and people are changing, but it is people like H.E.P.J. (Charlie) Jones, who have given this Company its character.

We shall miss him and wish him and his family a happy and contented retirement.

A. J. LEACH

RETIREMENTS

CHARLIE (H.E.P.) JONES, senior engineering assistant, who retired on 9th December.

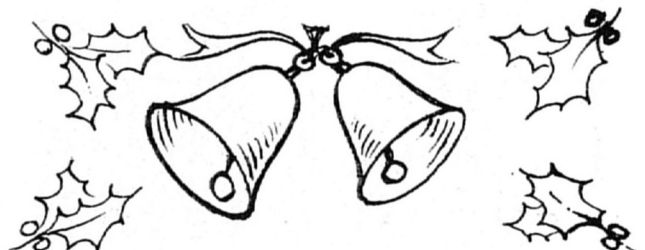
HARRY CLARKE, foreman carpenter at Wood Green Workshops.

We wish you many years of happy retirement.

MARRIAGE

Congratulations to :

JANE CLARKE, clerical assistant, D.D., who married DEREK WILSON on Saturday, 27th November.



TWO RONNIES



Welcome to Ron Lawrence the new Area Engineer for the north. Prior to joining the Company, Ron worked for Essex Water Company as Deputy Divisional Engineer which had many similarities with his present position. He has been in the Water Industry for 15 years and alleges that he has enjoyed it. His hobbies are:— A wife, 3 children (2 boys and a girl), an Afgan Hound (which he hopes to race and show) and a mortgage when he can find the right property.

We wish him a long and happy stay with the Company.

Welcome too, to Ron Perks, who will be seen by most of us from time to time in his capacity as Safety Officer. Ron comes to us from Her Majesty's Factory Inspectorate and is therefore well qualified to keep the Company out of the Factory Inspectors bad books.

Ron will, more importantly be able to assist in the implementation of the Company's Safety Policy, and guide us through the pitfalls of the Health and Safety at Work Act. There will be no "Big Brother" attitude, however, for Ron sees his role as a friendly helper, who wants us all to work in a safer way in a safer place.



A MEASURE OF BEAUTY

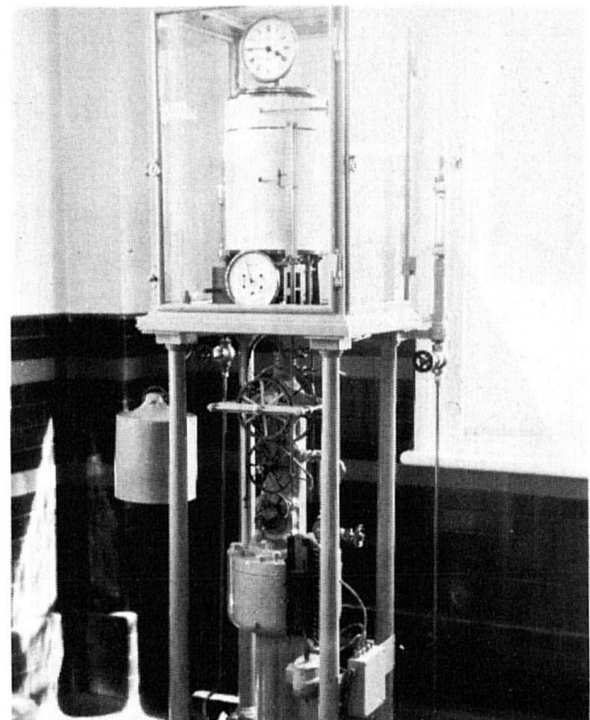
Standing in the corner of many of our older pumping stations is a tall "thing" which visitors are often attracted to as a curiosity. It has a clock and a chart on a revolving drum and lots of intricate clockwork gears and pulleys.

What the visitor is looking at is, in fact the flowmeter, which records, in thousands of gallons per hour, the output of the station. It records the instantaneous flow and the delivery pressure as ink traces on the chart, wrapped around a drum which revolves once every seven days.

Part of the ingenious clockwork is a simple "mechanical "computer" which multiplies the flow by the hours of pumping, thus giving the total output of the station over the week. Other gears, and curiously shaped cams with slender spokes, reminiscent of spider's webs, control the movement of the ink pens. The whole mechanism is driven by weights like in grandfather clocks.

When looked at closely, the craftsmanship of these instruments is at once obvious. Ornamental turned finials and fretwork on polished brass, and tiny file marks in the roots of the gear teeth, indicate vividly the care with which they were made.

Sadly, like the steam engines they originally measured, the old flowmeters will gradually be replaced by modern electronic instruments of greater accuracy but lesser beauty.



COMPETITION

Last issue's crossword (solution on page 14) was won by Maurice Tildesley from Wood Green who collected a £6 prize. He has shown appreciation by sending us the competition for this issue.

CODE BREAKER

The following place names in 'Double Greek' (a home-made cypher) should be familiar to most Company employees. From the correct solution to these, the final sentence can be deduced. The best of British ΠΔΛΥΝΝ

ΟΜΒΝΝΝΔ
 ΟΝΝΑΛΩ ΠΟΛΩ
 ΔΝΝΒΛΩΖ
 ΒΝΝΛΛΒΝΝΑ

Once again a £5 prize will be awarded to the first correct entry opened on 11th January 1977. This hopefully will ensure participation by all Company personnel. Incidentally, there were more entries for the crossword from outside people than Head Office — keep them coming folks — it's everyone's magazine.

ΝΒΒ ΑΒΝΒ ΝΒΩΛΩΝ ΒΔΛΥΝΝΑΛΩΛ ΜΝΟΘΘ ΒΛΩΒ ΟΛΛ
 ΒΒΥΛΑ ΝΒΘΔΘΝΒ Ο ΒΘΝΝΖ ΛΒΒ ΖΒΘΝ

MESSING ABOUT IN BOATS!

During the early part of the summer I enrolled for a class in the basic skills of sailing. I had been introduced to the sport the previous year and felt it was something that I could do and wanted to know more about it.

A cold Tuesday evening in late April found fifteen of us standing on the hard watching the Instructor rig up a dinghy, it looked extremely easy. The Instructor divided us into two groups, one to rig a dinghy, the other to have a short theory session in the Clubhouse. With fingers numb with cold, we struggled with ropes and hooks thinking we must be mad to do something like this. However, a mug of hot coffee and words of encouragement at the end of the evening spurred everyone on.

The first week or two meant only a short time on the water because it took us so long to get the boats ready but as each week passed, the promise of over three hours sailing became a reality.



One thing loomed over our heads at first, unfortunately — capsized drill. At enrolment we had been told to expect a drill and it would be quite early in the course. Needless to say, until it was over, the thought was at the back of our

minds — "What was going to happen?" "Would we feel foolish?"

Our Instructor was very considerate as he waited until there was a calm evening. To begin with, he ran through the drill theoretically in the Clubhouse, making use of a balsa model for demonstration. We then went out to the hard.

There were two boats rigged — a light fibreglass dinghy called a Graduate and a G.P.14. This is much heavier and although easier to handle on the water, it is more difficult to right when capsized.

I was second out. The actual capsizing seemed to occur in slow motion but once in the water, the Instructor and I had to move quite quickly to prevent the sail and mast sinking.

Each person had to go through the performance twice, acting firstly as helm and then as crew. The helmsman's job was to swim to the back of the boat and try and stand on the centreboard, which is a retractable keel on dinghies. Pressure on the centreboard should be sufficient to lift the masthead out of the water; rather like a seesaw. Whilst the helmsman is righting the boat, the crew should lie parallel with the side ready to be scooped aboard. Upon correction, the crew helps the helmsman aboard and then begins bailing.

The whole class successfully completed the drill and were very relieved, I think, when it was over.

Towards the end of the ten weeks of the course a young First Aider paid us a visit. Apparently the R.Y.A. requires candidates to have a basic knowledge of life saving methods.

One or two people didn't complete the course but those of us who did became a happy crowd. Now I am looking forward to the lighter evenings and warm weather of next Spring and Summer to enjoy the pleasures of sailing once again.

MARGARET HARRIS

WELCOME

to everyone who has joined us since September.

Cannock :

JOHN ROBINSON, trainee operative

Head Office :

NORMAN ASHWORTH, estates engineer
 JANE CLARKE, clerical assistant
 BILL GRACIE, chauffeur
 LIZA JAFFA, junior clerk
 JOYCELIN LINTON, canteen assistant
 JUDITH OLIVER, clerk/typist
 JANE O'REILLY, junior clerk
 EDWARD YANDZIO, graduate

Tipton :

ADRIAN CLARKE, trainee operative
 BRIAN HARPER, waste inspector
 DEBORAH KINSEY, clerical assistant
 ROY SARGEANT, trainee operative
 TOM WOODWARD, trainee operative
 DAVID WRIGHT, trenchman

Wednesbury :

BILL FEREDAY, bricklayer

Burton :

PHILLIP BECK, trenchman
 RON LAWRENCE, area engineer
 STEWART SUTTON, trenchman
 ANDREW WILSON, trainee operative

Walsall :

CHRIS ALLSOP, trenchman
 COLIN GEE, trenchman
 DAVID LLOYD, trenchman
 BOB SHEEDY, trenchman

Wood Green :

STAN MAULLINS, welder

GOLD WATCHES

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

TOM GARBETT, plant operator at Seedy Mill.

DENNIS JONES, assistant superintendent of Consumer Services at Tipton.

BOB TURNBULL, foreman at Hagley pumping station.

GEOFF WILDE, waterman at Tipton.

SOLUTION TO THE OCTOBER COMPETITION WON BY MAURICE TILDESLEY from WOOD GREEN



CHEAPER BY THE HALF-DOZEN

In the Christmas 1975 edition of the Review, in a short piece on amateur wine-making, Peter Dodds told his readers that wine started then would be "really good for Christmas . . . 76." I believed him, tried my hand at it, and still believe him! The proof is, so to speak, in the bottles — dozens of them.

The first attempt was also very near to being the last, however. The plastic fermentation vessel supplied with my original kit, unlike its owner, could not hold its wine. Instead of six bottles of wine the end result was two bottles plus a large red stain on the kitchen counter. The local pharmacist, himself a keen winemaker, came to the rescue, by providing a mysterious mixture which eradicated the stain. He also sold me a copy of 'First Steps in Winemaking' by C. J. J. Berry and advised me to use glass, not plastic . . . "It's cleaner and it won't leak unless you drop it." Book read, stain removed, wife pacified and leakproof glass demijohns bought, where to start?

Late winter is too early for fruit picking, even in sunny Salop, and it seemed a shame to go drilling holes in birch trees for their sap just as they were waking up. Commercial grape juice concentrates were therefore used for the first few gallons, giving good experience in fermenting, racking and similar dark arts before proceeding to the more difficult cookery or extraction, side of the business later on. Thus I became the owner of a fairly wide selection of Mosel, Rosé, Burgundy and Bordeaux type wines by the early Autumn. The cellar (pop crates stacked on their sides in the cupboard under the stairs) now also boasts a few half-dozen of such fresh fruit 'country' wines as Peach Perfection, Blackberry Beauty and Raspberry Tipple (what else!). Alas, the Sangria, made from grape concentrate, sultanas and fresh oranges and lemons, all went during the Tourist Season, but another good year of enjoyable drinking is now maturing under the stairs.

Thanks for the start, Peter. This most absorbing hobby provides, in return for a little time and the patience to let nature do its part, and at a cost per bottle about the same as that of 'pop', wines which, while they may never be 'great', are thoroughly palatable and may be enjoyed with both head (really, Edwin?) and conscience clear.

EDWIN LEE

A COMPLAINT

Sir,—

I write in order to point out the fact that at Cannock Area Office we received the 'News Review' on 10th November 1976. On glancing through the magazine I noticed the usual competition and started work on the crossword. After some little time, I saw the closing date for entries, being 1st November, 1976. Obviously there was no point in going on any further with this crossword, as interesting as it was. Later that day rumours were heard that this same competition had already been won.

Needless to say, I and most of my colleagues were very disappointed, not to say annoyed.

Perhaps in future you would ensure the magazine will reach its readers outside Birmingham Office on time, or alternatively the closing date of competitions, etc., are adequate so that outlying districts can have a fair chance of taking part; also allowing for our superb(?) postal system.

L. J. FIELD

EDITOR'S REPLY

There were some very red faces in the editorial office when the above letter was received. In order to save postage, the Area Office copies were sent out with the first available transport after publication day. By an unfortunate coincidence, it seems, no-one from Head Office went to Cannock in a Company vehicle until the 10th of the month. Anyone who went in their own car would not have called in at the Garage and therefore would not know about the News Review distribution arrangements. We did not think to check that the magazines actually **had** gone out.

In future and starting with this issue, we will ensure two things:— that the magazines go out as arranged; and secondly now that a firm Press date, and publication date is possible (enough material is coming in from contributors to be able to do this now) the date for the competition close will be fixed well ahead of publication day. As proof of that rash promise, the next issue will be published on 17th March and the last day for items to reach the editor will be Friday, 18th February.

DOTTY DEFINITIONS

- Propaganda — A real goose.
Humerus — A rotten joke.
Wigwam — A blow on the head.
Paltry — A small chicken.
Digest — A Welsh legionaire
Interpol — A parrots funeral.
Chaste — A lady who's never been caught.
Debunk — A Jamaican four poster.
Patrol — An Irish somersault.
Expond — Two dollars eighty cents.
Inoculate—Pakistani castigating Mr. Powell
for not being on time.

ALAN LANDER

FOOTBALL NEWS

The start of our second season in Division One saw the team make good progress in both Cup and League games. The reason for this must lie with the two pre-season friendlies which gave the team a chance to play together and achieve a greater understanding. This was necessary as the team suffered a body blow when three of its longest serving players gracefully retired, Maurice Asbury (Wood Green), Roy Jones (Tipton) and Mike Crowe (Revenue). We would all like to thank them for their never tiring efforts over the last six years.

So with virtually a new team, we climbed to third place in the league, losing only two games. Though our good start helped us through to the third round of the Alan Peck Cup, a bad spell of play recently saw us knocked out of both the Billy Nichols Shield and the Walsall Challenge Cup.

Spirits are high at the moment as the team looks forward to its best season yet in the Bloxwich Combination League.

Results : Played 7; Won 4; Drawn 1;
Lost 2; For 15; Against 17; Points 9.

JOHN MORRALL

SOCIAL CLUB CALENDAR 1977

- JANUARY 8th — Children's Party
MARCH 25th — Annual Dinner and Dance
JUNE 10th — Annual Outing
NOVEMBER 5th — Bonfire

OTHER FUNCTIONS —

Dates yet to be confirmed :—

1. Canteen — dance for completion of re-decoration.
2. Joint Function — Competition Night with Tame Division.
3. Ramble.
4. Hobbies Night.
5. Treasure Hunt (on foot or in cars).
6. Garden Visits.
7. Theatre Trips.
8. Canteen — Christmas Dance.
9. Parent's and Children's Outing.
10. Provisional — Continental Trip.
11. Vegetable Show.
12. Works Visits.

These are ideas put forward by Social Club Members to date. If **anyone** has further suggestions please contact Alan Evers (New Works) or John Dixon (Accounts) or John Morrall (Admin.)



* DONT LOOK NOW... BUT HERE COMES THE ANSWER TO THE NOTE YOU SENT TO THAT NEW GIRL IN THE TYPING OFFICE! *