



The South Staffordshire Waterworks Company

REVIEW

September, 1981.

29th July, 1981.

Even the notorious English weather showed its mark of royal respect and conformed to the order of the day and allowed the British Subjects to see their future King and Queen join their lives together with all the pomp and ceremony that only the English with years of traditional splendour could have organised to perfection.

Our Queen must have been proud to see the loyalty of thousands of her subjects who made the journey to London to give her son and his beautiful bride, Diana, a day to remember.

The bride, a beautiful true pure English Rose, who with all her obvious aristocracy was willing to work with children in a Kindergarden is all we would have wished our future Queen to be.

We wish H.R.H's The Prince and Princess of Wales all our best wishes for the future happiness and long may our Royal Family reign.



...A Perfect Day

for a Perfect Couple!

MMC REPORT WILL HAVE IMPACT Says Mr Markham

1—THE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND INVESTIGATION...

The terms of reference required the Commission to look at three aspects of the Authority and the Companies:

- (a) their efficiency and costs;
 - (b) the arrangements between the Authority and the Companies for the supply of water; and
 - (c) arrangements to enable domestic consumers to be charged for services other than by reference to rateable values.
- The Commission had to say whether, in relation to any matters within these areas,

any of the parties is pursuing a course of conduct which operates against the public interest.

During the course of investigation the Company met Members and Officers of the Commission on a number of occasions to discuss the Company's operations.

2—CONCLUSIONS OF THE COMMISSION ABOUT THE COMPANY...

In their general conclusions, the Commission stated that:

- (a) on the question of efficiency and costs, the Company is not pursuing a

course of conduct against the public interest.

(b) in respect of relationships between the Authority and the Company, neither of the parties is pursuing a course of conduct which operates against the public interest.

(c) the delay in introducing optional domestic metering or the failure to provide an alternative to rateable value based on charges for domestic consumers other than the Company's proposals for optional metering does not constitute an abuse of the Company's monopoly power or is a course of conduct which operates against the public interest.

Comments by the Company on the Report

In support of these conclusions the Commission noted that our water charges are lower than the charges of the other organisations investigated. The Commission says that they were impressed by the standard of service provided and that our consumers do not feel remote from us.

Attention is drawn to the Company's high standards of water quality; low level of consumer complaints; advanced standards of pumping plant utilisation, energy economy and telemetry; effective control of day-to-day operations and water leakage and the importance attached to cost saving.

The Commission considered that the organisation and management of the Company suited its require-

ments and that our handling of complaints is effective and appropriate and indicates an awareness of the need to be responsive to consumers' problems.

The Commission felt that the formal relationships with the Authority worked well in practice and did not call for addition or amendment.

The Company will carefully consider the conclusions of the Commission and, where necessary, will take appropriate action.

In a wider context, the Company sees the Report as a positive and constructive appraisal of current practices within the water industry and feels that many of the matters raised will be considered in depth throughout the industry.

W. A. MARKHAM
General Manager

IMPROVEMENT IN THE EFFICIENCY OF THE COMPANY

The Company is introducing measures to improve its efficiency for the following reasons...

(a) During preparatory work for the investigation by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, an unacceptable growth of expenditure in certain activities in recent years was revealed.

(b) The need to contain water charges to the lowest possible level and particularly during the period of severe economic depression in the West Midlands.

(c) A higher than anticipated deficit in revenue expenditure during the financial year ended 31st March 1981.

(d) The likelihood of the recession continuing to adversely affect income from trade consumers in the foreseeable future.

Following numerous constructive and helpful discussions with employees and Trade Union representatives, further consideration will be given to the following measures which the Company wish to take to improve efficiency...

(a) A reduction of manning levels through natural wastage, early retirement or voluntary severance of employment.

(b) A comprehensive review of the Company's organisation and management structure.

(c) A review of the activities that create overhead charges and the deferment of non-essential works.

(d) A reduction in the participation of contractors in maintenance work except where technical or cost consideration would favour their employment.

(e) A reduction in overtime to meet essential needs only, and a review of standby duty payments and house rentals.

(f) A regulation, more closely, of purchase of stores, plant, equipment and payments to personnel in respect of car mileage allowances, and bonuses, etc.

(g) A determined endeavour to reduce office expenditure at all work centres.

Further meetings of employees and Trade Union representatives will be held at all work centres with a view to describing, more fully, the measures to be introduced and to ensure full consultation with all involved.

From the discussions held to date, many suggestions have been received from employees on ways in which we can run the Company at less cost, and such contributions are invaluable.

It is clear that by each employee offering help by applying extra effort and skill in the work which they do, and by the joint efforts of all, carried out with enthusiasm and determination, the Company can achieve the necessary and essential improvements in efficiency.

W. A. MARKHAM—*General Manager*

The ROYAL WEDDING

During the ceremony it was necessary for the duty office assistant at Walsall Control to take action to reduce the abnormally high system pressures, to avoid burst mains.

Note: High pressure occurs due to a reduction in use of water so, obviously, most households were 'glued' to their sets.

There was a slight reduction when the register was being signed (TEA!) but this was of a short duration as high pressures were again experienced as the wedding procession returned to Buckingham Palace.

Welcome...

To the new Secretary and Treasurer

Keith Gomme was admitted as a member of the Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy in 1966.

He has been a past Chairman of the South Wales and West of England Region.

During his earlier years he spent 12 years in Local Government.

However, 16 years ago he became employed in the Water Industry as from 1965-71 was Assistant Treasurer Buckinghamshire Water

Board, 1971-74 Chief Accountant Essex Water Company, 1974-81 Assistant Director of Finance Wessex Water Authority.

He was married in 1963 and he and his wife, Margaret, are now proud parents of three daughters, Carol 15, Debra 12 and Francise who is eight.

His hobbies are Choral Singing, Motoring and an inactive interest in Sports.

Retirements...

Mr S. V. Lancaster, T.D., J.P., D.L., R.F.A., Company Director, joined the Board in 1958, filling the vacancy which arose as a result of the resignation of Mr W. L. Burrows, his fellow partner in Howard Smith Thompson & Co.

In 1959 he became Chairman of the Finance Committee and a Trustee and Chairman of the Committee of Management of the Company's Superannuation Fund.

His able guidance of these two Committees over a period of 22 years reflected both his high professional ability and, in the case of the Superannuation Fund, his deep concern for present and retired employees of the Company and their families. The depth of Mr Lancaster's interest in the Company was reflected in the range and quality of his contributions to discussions at Board meetings where his presence will be greatly missed.

His extensive public activities included many years service as a Justice of the Peace and prolonged service with the Territorial Army. During the last war he was deeply involved in the planning of the cross channel allied invasion of Europe in 1944.

This year Mr Lancaster celebrates 50 years as a Chartered Accountant, and is justifiably proud of the fact that he is a 'Double Honours' man. His specialist work was on liquidations and trusteeship.

Mr Lancaster enjoys his golf and is often accompanied by his wife who, it is said, plays a steadier round than he does.

He retired on 30th June 1981, and we wish him good health and happiness.

Mr I. E. Wallis, F.C.A., I.P.F.A., Chartered Accountant and a member of the Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, joined the Company in May 1954 as Assisant Secretary, having previously served in the Treasurers' Departments at Barking and Luton.

He was appointed Secretary to the Company on 1st April 1978, following the retirement of his colleague Mr Aubrey Tibbenham.

Mr Wallis joined the Grenadier Guards in 1940 and was commissioned to the Leicestershire Regiment in 1941, which he served throughout the last war.

From the start, much of his time and effort were devoted to the accounting and associated functions of the Company and over the years he has personally guided the development of the wide range of sophisticated computer-based systems we rely upon today.

He has always been keenly interested in the Employees and all Company activities and always seemed to be able to acknowledge everyone by their first names.

He spent many Saturdays giving encouragement to the Company football teams.

His friendly gentlemanly manner will be missed but I am sure his keen active interest in ballroom dancing and his newly acquired hobby of golf will fill his days pleasantly and we wish him and his wife well.



Mr R. G. Clarke, Confidential Assistant to the Secretary—affectionally known as 'Nobby'—joined the Company in July 1937 as a Junior Clerk, at the grand salary of £39 per annum.

He joined the Royal Army Service Corps on 1st September 1939 and saw service in Europe with the 52nd Lowland Division.

After his war service 'Nobby' worked in the Accounts Section maintaining cash books, etc, and was later responsible for Salaries and Wages with increasing involvement with Superannuation matters. He was ultimately promoted Departmental Head for Salaries, Wages and Superannuation.

'Nobby' was actively associated with the Staff Association Club for 27 years, mainly as Treasurer for 17 years and as Chairman (1971 and 1974). He was a member of the Thrift Fund Committee.

For four years he served on the Council of the National Association of Pension Funds and was Chairman of the Local Group for ten years. He is recognised widely as an authority on superannuation matters and the advice he was so ready to offer, particularly to members of the Company and Pensioners, was of the very best.

His hobbies include amateur operatics—behind the scenes! Court Leet of the Manor of Alcester; Twinning work in association with the French town Vallet, motoring and motor cars.

Sadly, he took early retirement (10th April 1981) because of his wife Betty's ill health and her death so soon after his leaving was tragic and our sad condolences are sincerely given to him and his young family.



Mr Eric A. Crisp, Computer Manager, entered the Company's service in January 1947, after six years service with the Royal Army Ordnance Corps. He took part in the Normandy Landings in 1944 and also served in Egypt and Palestine.

He commenced employment with the Company as a rating clerk—i.e.: assessment of water charges—and was transferred to Power Samas Machine Accounting in 1958. In 1966, when the Company purchased the computer, he was transferred to that department where he became manager. He tackled all the teething troubles of the computer with enthusiasm and many hours of overtime were worked in the early days to ensure that the systems were right.

Eric is a keen gardener and he enjoys all sorts of sport, particularly Horse Racing over the sticks.

Prior to his retirement on 31st August 1981 he had been slightly unwell having had some optical trouble which necessitated in an operation.

We hope that this has now been totally rectified and he will enjoy good health during his retirement.

Note: Photographs of Mr K. Gomme and Mr S. V. Lancaster were not available at time of issue and will be included in next issue.

THE LONDON MARATHON

RESULT:

Joint 1st—Simonsen (Norway) and Bradsley (United States) 2 hours 11 minutes 48 seconds
3rd—Wright (Great Britain) 2 hours 12 minutes 53 seconds

NOTE—Rosemary Wright 2 hours 54 minutes 53 seconds, A. Evers 3 hours 28 minutes 11 seconds

Trevor Triumphs again

Trevor Wright's successful dedication to the world of athletics has yet again filled his colleagues with admiration. His success in the London Marathon in being the first Englishman over the line, in third position, shows that he is still reaping the justifiable rewards for effort. His time was 2hrs, 12mins, 53secs.

His wife, Rosemary (nee Stirling), who is well remembered for her own personal athletic achievements of winning the 800 metres in the Commonwealth Games in 1970 and creating a new British Record in the Olympic Final in Munich, also ran in the Marathon and finished in the remarkable time of 2hrs, 54mins, 10secs. Rosemary's first Marathon was the Avon Ladies in London.

Trevor and Rosemary, who met in the European Games in Helsinki in 1971, have two children but still manage to jointly continue to share their interest in athletics and Marathons now seem to be a way of life. In June they again ran together in the Sandbach Marathon in Cheshire. Trevor although favourite to win was not up to peak fitness and came in at sixth position.

Trevor took part in the New York Marathon in 1978 and the New Zealand Marathon in February this year and came third on both of these occasions.

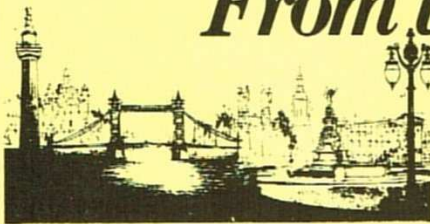
Trevor's obvious talent at Marathon running is proved by the numerous invitations he is now receiving to take part in world wide events of this kind and I am sure that if he is able to arrange for some of the occasions to fit with work requirements he will make us all proud to be associated with him.



Mr E. J. Thompson, the Company's Chairman, presents Trevor Wright with cut-glass candle sticks in honour of his achievement in the London Marathon.

From the Horses' Mouths

...in a manner of speaking



At 8-30am on a wet Sunday morning, perfect conditions, as any true marathon veteran will inform you, thousands began to arrive in Greenwich Park, London.

9-00am and the 25-pound naval cannon fired and 7,000 would-be marathon runners were on the way running in the first London Marathon (distance: 26 miles, 385 yards).

The race went through Woolwich and around the *Cutty Sark* at Greenwich and the crowds lined the route cheering on anyone they recognised. The rain was still sheeting down and I thought I am glad I am running and not watching.

By the time Tower Bridge was reached I knew it was the half-way point and at the front was a group of eight runners that had broken away from the rest of the field.

I was greeted by familiar voices at this stage and managed to acknowledge my mother-in-law with a wave.

After Tower Bridge the leading group turned right and onto the Docklands and at around 15 to 16 miles somewhere on the Isle of Dogs, Dick Beardsley (USA) and Inger Simonsen (Norway) broke away. I was then in the chasing group which was down to four. At around 21 miles I was in third place isolated and being chased by only one runner.

Coming out of the Isle of Dogs the course went around the Tower and this was the only stretch that was deserted, with only the Beefeaters on guard duty for company.

Next came the Embankment to Parliament Square and I could see the leading pair out in front.

By now the legendary 'Wall'—that terrible moment when the fuel runs out and the body finds itself operating on willpower alone starts to set in. Usually this claims many victims—fortunately I was feeling OK.

I ran along Bridge Walk past Buckingham Palace up Constitution Hill, where the welcome finish could be seen.

I waited at the finish in the rain watching and waiting for Rosemary (my wife) to finish. It was encouraging watching all the people reaching their goal and competing the Marathon.

More than 80% made it home some 5,300 men and women.

Behind the finish line officials worked in the pouring rain to bring the fading runners back to reality. The rest were handed silver foil space blankets to keep warm and were bungled onto waiting buses or wandered off in several directions.

I walked up The Mall with Rosemary and onto the Strand to our hotel to a welcome bath and a few drinks.

Facts... In total 1,000 volunteer helpers handed out 2,000 foil blankets, 400 gallons of coffee, 5,000 apples and 50,000 plastic cups, on hand were 500 Special Constables, 26 First Aid Stations, 300 St. John Ambulance Men and a Cardiac Unit, on Constitution Hill. There were also tents, marquees and 75 portable lavatories.

And, of course, one million people watching, who were responsible for willing many survivors to the finishing line.

TREVOR WRIGHT

Note!

Alan Evers and Alan Lander entered the Chelmsley Wood Marathon to help raise money for 'The International Year of the Disabled', and both wish to thank the many Company employees who sponsored them. They collected over £250.

Six wheelchair competitors who started the race all finished the 26-mile course.

Other Marathon Men...

It all started after a couple of pints at our orienteering club's annual dinner last November—someone said that there was to be a London Marathon in March 1981 and I said I wouldn't mind having a go. During the speeches I declared my intention of taking part and in the cold light of day next morning I realised what I had done. Being a man of my word, however, I embarked upon a 22 week training programme starting from going for a run for 10 minutes and culminating in two-hour sessions, but that is an article in itself.

There was a large response to the first London Marathon with over 20,000 people applying to take part including Rosemary Wright, Alan Lander and myself. Trevor Wright was not going to take part as he had only recently returned from a marathon in New Zealand where he came third but Chris Brasher invited him and Rosemary was keen, so he agreed to have a go. In reducing the numbers to 7,500 Alan Lander was unsuccessful in gaining a place and I was with him when his wife telephoned him to tell him the news and I have never seen a man so disappointed.

The great day finally arrived and I realised I was going to have to put my legs where my mouth was and never having run more than 16 miles there was no guarantee that I would make the full 26 miles 385 yards and I suddenly wondered how Mary and the boys would find me if I was carted off on a stretcher to a remote hospital along the course. However, I put on an optimistic front and my parting shot was—if you want to find me at the finish look in the hospital tent!

All 7,500 of us were assembled on Greenwich Common in one of the main avenues and the seconds were ticking away to nine o'clock. The atmosphere was fantastic, helicopters were hovering overhead, the crowds were tremendous even though it was drizzling.

At nine o'clock precisely the gun boomed and we were off, steadily at first past jazz and pipe bands and the pace increased steadily until everyone found their own rhythm.

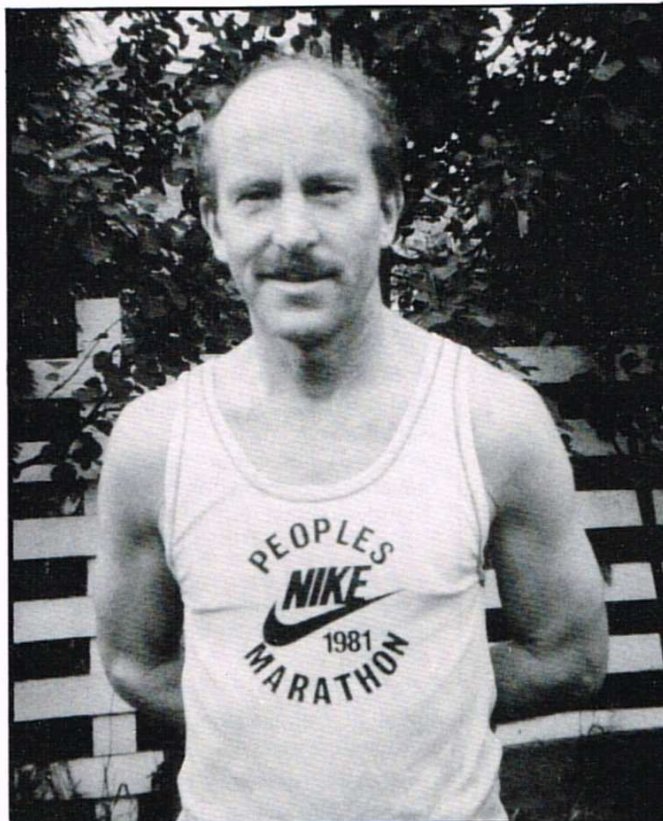
At two miles I passed a gold-lame clad, blonde-headed runner proceeding very steadily—it was Jimmy Saville—running to raise £50,000 for Stoke Manderville. Shortly after that I passed a runner with 'I am not Lord Lucan' on his back—but I never saw him again and in Greenwich Village I passed a Lord Mayor in full regalia with his chain of office round his neck standing on the side of the road looking very important and getting soaked.

At eight miles we passed a glass fronted hospital and the patients and nurses lined the windows on all floors waving to us and we waved back.

The crowds were unbelievable all the way round the course with the girls and the veteran runners getting special encouragement.

Passing Tower Bridge for the second time, we only had four miles to go and although I was tired the crowds willed you on and wouldn't let you slow down. As I approached Big Ben I realised I may be able to beat 3½ hours and so to the final stretch up to Buckingham Palace and the finish. I now know what Prince Charles and Lady Diana felt like when they went down The Mall in July.

ALAN EVERS



ALAN LANDER
Administration, Central Workshops

Alan has also become a very keen Marathon runner. He said: "Once you get 'hooked' on running then that's it."

Alan reckons it's the best way to release tension and think things out totally on your own.

To keep fit he runs about five miles, at least, every night and usually 20 miles at the weekend.

He has run in Nike Peoples Marathon at Chelmsley Wood and in the Sandwell Marathon in which he achieved 3hrs 40mins.

MIDDLE AGE

Wrinkles mapping up my face,
Running hard to keep the pace,
Natures physiological mime,
To indicate the march of time.

A stomach not quite turned to tripe,
But softer than when young and ripe,
No good blaming all that starch,
It didn't cause the fallen arch.

Hearing fine for disco's din,
Has problems with proverbial pin,
Eyes once hawkish have to peer,
Hard at objects held too near.

Brain's as sharp as ever though,
Not that I have cause to crow,
With former I.Q. one to six,
Or is my memory playing tricks.

Speed has fallen on the run,
Excuse—it's only done for fun,
Pulse rate quicker, but breathing fair,
I shall not even mention hair.

Tempus wins without a doubt,
As one by one the lights go out,
Thank god whatever else is ex,
It hasn't yet affected sex.

ALAN LANDER

THE BRAIN DRAIN AGAIN

Quiz 1980-81

Once again, by popular demand, the Birmingham Social Club launched into the lunch-time Green Lane Quiz. The preliminary rounds started in September 1980 and culminated in the finals held after the Social Club A.G.M. in February 1981.

The number of entrants reached staggering proportions. By the closing date no less than 18 teams of three had been press-ganged into this quest to find the brains of South Staffs 1981.

The contestants came from all walks of life—though in some cases the organiser had difficulty in detecting any life at all—and were all of one accord... to prove just how little they knew.

Having split the teams into four groups—A, B, C and D (two groups from HQ and two from CO)—the contest took shape as follows...

Central Office

Group A

Mainlayers
Opps. N P's
Conmen
Three Drips
Crumbs

Group B

Watchmen
Boftins
Technocrats
Fusiliers
High Milers

Head Office

Group C

Bits & Pieces
Shirkers
Secs Pistols
Whizzers

Group D

Building Blocks
Three Scrooges
Ad Libbers
Number Crunchers

It was clear from the onset that all groups would be closely fought, as between them the 18 teams had a combined I.Q. of 2.3 on the Richter Scale.

The story unfolded slowly...

Group A would be settled between the Mainlayers (pause for applause and plenty of self-praise) and OP's N P's.

Group B, Technocrats and the Fusiliers.

Group C, anybody but the Whizzers (commiserations to this team from Revenue, who failed to score above five points in any of their matches due to Cedric Bloomer's pending brain operation—he was going to have one put in).

Group D Building Blocks and Three Scrooges. It was rumoured that the Three Scrooges had been revising the *Encyclopedia Britannica* for the quiz, but only reached the letter B.



The Winners... Bits and Pieces.

At long last all groups but that of Group C were decided. Unbelievably three teams had drawn for the final place in the Semis. John Morrall (the overall organiser, question preparer, adjudicator, argument settler, good looking, intelligent writer of this article) was called to HQ to officiate over a three-way tie-breaker. The eventual winners by the narrowest of margins were Bits and Pieces (Revenue Department).

The night of the semi-finals and final arrived. A well stocked licenced bar helped calm the nerves of competitors and send the audience—about 100 strong—into a drunken stupor. Once a contingent of Revenue Department supporters had been bedded down in Steel House Lane Police Station for rowdy behaviour, the first semi-final got under way.

First Semi-Final— Ops N P's v Bits and Pieces

The experienced veterans of Bits and Pieces—with the exception of John Anderton who spent three hours in the toilet—started slowly against a strong—but inebriated—Ops N P's team. This semi-final was finely balanced until the last buzzer round when Bits and Pieces took the initiative and won through to the final by comfortable margin.

Second Semi-final— Building Blocks v Technocrats.

The New Works Building Section (Building Blocks) lined up a formidable team in Stan Morris (B.Sc. in *Times Crosswords*), Jane Edwards (B.A. in rubbing black dots off SSW Board Reports) and Frank McKee (Assistant Manager of the All-England Croquette team) but to the astonishment of all present, were absolutely massacred by the Technocrats (EMD) 50 points to 11—bad luck Building Blocks.



The Not-So-Bads Runners-up... Technocrats.

The final promised to be a real ding-dong affair with both teams having appeared in the previous year's semi-finals.

Bits and Pieces

Joan Hatfield
Kevin Walsh
John Anderton

Technocrats

Chris Pattison
Robin Comley
Ken Hart

The final turned out to be every bit as good as expected. After the end of the first four rounds it had been a game of nip-and-tuck, with both teams holding the lead at some stage.

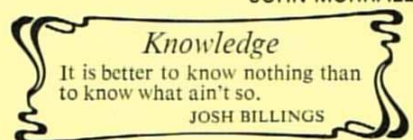
Entering into the final buzzer round the Technocrats lead by four points. Then as in the previous year in their semi-final, Kevin Walsh's brain exploded and he answered the last six questions correctly. What a marvellous end to a good night's entertainment. Bits and Pieces 38 points, Technocrats 32 points.

The winners of 1981... Bits and Pieces.

My thanks to all the Social Club Committee members for their help, to Harold Hatfield and company at HQ for organising the preliminary rounds and finally to the Chief Engineer, Mr Brown, for presenting the prizes.

So until this year's quiz... Au Revoir!

JOHN MORRALL



Knowledge

It is better to know nothing than to know what ain't so.

JOSH BILLINGS

Social G

There is a move towards more various Social Clubs and discus place.

It is hoped eventually that s reached between these groups an even more interesting and va

BUTLINS hi-di-hi

Once again the time had arrived for the Company's Annual Family Outing.

The weather, cloudy and dull, the coach very good and the spirits of those on board very high.

After a 'half-a-crown' conducted tour of the West Midlands motorway maintenance programme, we were speeding quietly and smoothly towards the West Country and Minehead.

A stop for breakfast or whatever you fancied and a chance to confer with members on the other coaches, then on again through the picturesque villages and towns that make up the West Country.

Roses and other flowers, well in advance of our's at home because of the slightly warmer temperatures, were in splendid array as if bidding us welcome.

We arrived at *Bultin-land* at lunch-time and having eaten our splendid packed lunches, set out for the survival of the fittest.

A temporary set-back awaited us, for most of the amusements were closed for lunch or rain.

However, when the sun came out, so did the *Redcoats* and the attendants and it was all go for those who so desired.

Despite the plastic cups, knives and spoons, etc, when one tried any of the Camp Catering, a good time was had by all, especially those who had younger children.

A pleasant run home through the same picturesque countryside, then on to the motorway for a brief stop to stretch ones legs and safely home.

Where to next year?

RON WOODHOUSE

Club News

joint organisation between the sessions and meetings have taken

ould favourable agreement be hat they will be able to produce ed programme.

LONDON THEATRE TRIP

Three coaches took off for London on our ever increasingly popular Annual Day Out.

In our coach the mood was, as usual, jolly with re-unions of old colleagues filling the bus with general chatter.

The weather wasn't perfect but showed promise and with a total belief in John Morrall's ability to organise everything to perfection, I knew the sun would shine.

We left Sheepcote Street at 9-30am and although I was amazed that the journey to London took four hours, the stop at one of the best motorway cafes—*Julie's*—I have ever used, made the journey pleasant and the cheeseburger I had was equally as good as the memorable ones in *McDonald's* Hamburger Bar in Canada.

We arrived in London to torrential rain. Doubt crept into my mind, my faith in John began to waver, but the sun soon broke through and I felt ashamed that my faith could be so easily shaken.

The afternoon was our own and some used their time sightseeing or shopping, but I won't ask what three young men from Accounts planned to do with their time, but they were last seen heading up Park Lane towards the *Bunny Club*.

My afternoon was dedicated to browsing round *Harrods* to satisfy the desire of my friend, who had never entered these illustrious portals.

She was sadly disappointed and the only thing that made the visit worthwhile was coming face-to-face with James Mason.

We arrived outside the *Victoria Theatre* with enough time to spare to enjoy a drink with all our colleagues.

They seemed to have all enjoyed their day and were in good spirits—perhaps they had arrived much earlier!

The show, *Annie*, was excellent, the stage children stealing the show naturally, but the atmosphere in the theatre was stifling and even I found it a virtual sauna.

Back home to 'Brum' in the early hours of the morning, fully satisfied with our day out.

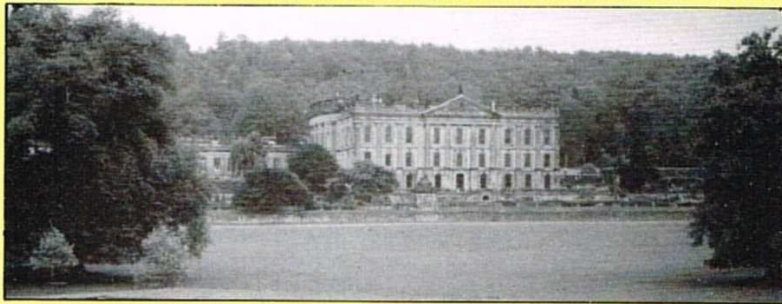
A trip to London every year would suit me fine.

C. TURNER



Garden Club

Visit to Bakeswell and Chatsworth House



Chatsworth House.

A report from SARA STEVENS

Fellow garden enthusiasts can always depend on Harold Hatfield arranging a day to remember and this was no exception.

A full coach of employee's families and friends found themselves surrounded by Morris dancers when we arrived at Bakeswell to see the famous *Well Dressing*. This ancient custom is still carried out every year, and draws crowds from near and far. It is a great tourist attraction and the five wells were beautifully and painstakingly decorated, each petal lovingly placed by either scouts, guides or women's institute members. Out came the cameras and much jostling took place for the best views of this very colourful scene.

After a look round and lunch we took the short drive to Chatsworth House, the home of the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire. The dedicated stately homes visitor amongst us found much to delight with the paintings and architecture, but those

of us who were itching to get out into the gardens could see through the windows the delights that were to come when the tour of the house was over.

Even though the Spring blossoms had come and gone the gardens were quite colourful, lupins, roses and fuchsias in full colour. Much admired was the cascading waterfall, silver and glistening in the afternoon sunlight, it is so high it seemed to reach the sky.

Many plants were purchased and 'oohs and aahs and what on earth is that called' resounded through the coach on our journey back through Matlock Bath, for a delicious tea at the *New Bath Hotel*.

We all enjoyed the sandwiches, scones with cream and jam, cakes and lots of tea. Then some of the party strolled through the grounds whilst others walked down to the river, on a perfect sunny June evening. By this time the Hotel's lounge bar was open and a cool refreshing drink and quiet talk was the end of a perfect day—before we journeyed home again.

We all send thanks to Harold and here's to the next visit.



Joan Hatfield, Dora Lees, Edna Priestnall and Gwen Hawkey at one of the wells.

The Scenery in the Sauna was Sensational The Rhine wasn't bad too!

The sun shone on our merry group as we waited for the coach outside Head Office to take us on our long weekend to Cologne. This set the scene for the whole weekend, sunny, fine weather, apart from a short relaps at the German border—snow!

Our first port of call in the fair city of Cologne was, of course, the cathedral, with its very distinctive twin spires and beautifully ornate masonry. It is very noticeable how clean Germany is, no rubbish anywhere and everything in an orderly fashion, which only goes to enhance the beauty of the country.

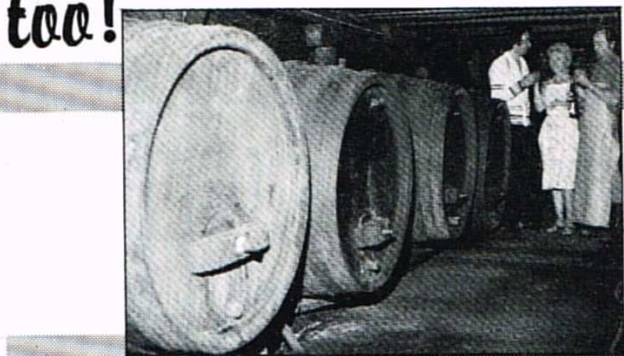
On arriving at the hotel we found it only a short walk from the city centre and a hundred yards or so to the banks of the Rhine. The hotel itself was excellent with everything one could wish for, pool, sauna and TV's in every room.

The sauna was available to anyone who cared to use it. There was one drawback that may have put people off using it—it was mixed, but unlike moderate Englanders, the Europeans went in in their all-together. This caused some embarrassment to some members of our merry band, when on entering the sauna it was occupied by a couple of Germans! It 'fair took one's breath away' in more ways than one.



After a short, but welcome, rest and a shower, we embarked on the coach again for a wine tasting trip to Alken on the Mosel River. The trip down the Alken was only interrupted by the avid soccer fans listening to the football results. This was because Aston Villa stood a chance of winning the League's top spot, which, of course, they did, causing waves of cheering throughout the length of the coach.

Alken is a small village perched on the banks of the Mosel, with grape vines as far as the eye could see, and dominated by a Schloss (castle) which can be seen from all over Alken. The wine keller was below the schloss and underground with an atmosphere all of its own. We left the wine keller with the glowing feeling of wine inside us and a few bottles under our arms.



A short walk to a nearby hotel provided us with our first taste of a German meal and a few beers. German food is quite filling and tasty, basic and wholesome would describe it but well worth trying. After our meal it was back to the hotel for a very much needed nights sleep, ready for an early start the following morning on a Rhine steamer trip.

Six o'clock Sunday morning and down to breakfast, out onto the coach and off to Boppard to join our Rhine steamer. The leisurely trip up the Rhine gave us time to reflect on Germany's beautiful scenery and its many Rhine schlosses (castles). Our trip took us past the Lorelei Rock and on up the river to Rudieshiem, which is famous for its *Asbach* Brandy, with a very distinctive flavour.

Here we had time to walk round and see the sights as well as purchase a few souvenirs. Just like the rest of Germany it was clean and orderly and very picturesque.

The time seemed to pass quickly and once again we were back on the steamer for our return trip. The party atmosphere was running high with Mr Ron Perks organising dancing lessons at the stern of the steamer, and German beer flowing in gallons. This, of course, meant the coach made one or two unscheduled stops on its return to the hotel for one reason or another.

The evening gave us chance to savour some of the night life of Cologne, with its many varied cafes and beer kellers. This city seems not to sleep, there is something going on all the time, if only watching the rabbits run about on the many open spaces around the city.

All too soon we had to leave this very beautiful part of Germany. As if to wish us a tearful farewell, we had our first rain and first and only problem. A badly parked car meant a strong man act by the male contingency, this was dealt with swiftly by lifting it up and carrying it across the road, to allow the coach to depart.

Back to England with our taste buds wetted for more European excursions, one can only say... 'Next time see you in Rome.'

TONY PHIPPS



PENSIONERS OUTING 1981

Reminiscing is so very enjoyable; and the Company gave pleasure to a record number of pensioners and their guests, (over 350), when, on 22nd July, it brought them together from all over its area of supply to congregate, in the first instance at Ragley Hall, Alcester. As usual the Chairman of the Company, Mr E. J. Thompson with Mrs Thompson, Mr W. A. Markham and other senior officers, welcomed everyone personally. Cliff Bateman drew upon his wide knowledge of each individual and made the introductions accordingly.

The reminiscing started on the coaches as friends met each other for the first time for months. Then, on alighting at Ragley Hall, familiar faces were seen, greetings exchanged, anecdotes recounted, and news of colleagues and families brought up to date. The chatting continued during the tour of the Hall and opinions were given on the furniture, decor and layouts of the rooms and grounds.

An excellent tea was provided at the Guy Nelson Hall where a speech of welcome was made by Mr Thompson. After thanking all who had helped to organise the event, he singled out Edna Knowles for special mention. She had been involved in successfully arranging the visits since 1970 and as she would be taking early retirement this year she would be attending in future as a Guest. The Chairman went on to congratulate everyone involved in the enormous task of preparing the

Company's case for the Monopolies Commission investigation. It was very satisfying that the Company had come through with flying colours.

He commented on the recession in industry which made it necessary for the Company to slim down its labour force and paid tribute to the teamwork of the Company's employees which has been its strength for many years.

The Chairman gave the following statistics for the record... Oldest attending male pensioner, Mr J. Henney, aged 89. Oldest attending female pensioner, Miss M. D. S. Brawn, (a good looking 80). Male member with longest service, Mr A. R. Spink, 50 years. Female member with longest service, Miss M. D. S. Brawn, 49 years. Birthday greetings were extended to Mr H. J. C. Tittensor.

Mr Wallis, who is retiring in August, was unable to attend as he was on leave and would shortly be handing over to his successor, Mr K. T. Gomme.

In his reply, Peter Thomas expressed all our views when he referred to the Chairman's praise of the Company's teamwork. He suggested it went further than this and that employees, past and present, were lifelong friends. He quoted that an organisation is only as good as the man at the top and he praised the Chairman and the Chief Officers, and their predecessors for their evident concern for the well being of the Company Employees. He expressed our gratitude to Mrs Thompson who, although somewhat incapacitated had not let this stop her from attending.

Protracted farewells were made, with promises to keep in touch. The coaches went their separate ways and, after a stop for drinks, further farewells were made as we went our individual ways.

ALFRED MYERS



- 1— Mr and Mrs E. J. Thompson and Mr and Mrs G. W. Taylor.
- 2— Mr and Mrs P. F. Thomas.
- 3— Messrs A. Hollowood and A. E. Paris.
- 4— S. Morgan, H. B. Marshall, W. J. Everett and Guests.
- 5— Alf Myers.
- 6— Group of members at Tea.



GRUMPWOOD P.S.

A new 20-metre span bridge constructed entirely from Aluminium Alloy extruded sections was recently erected over the River Churnet at Crumpwood Pumping Station.

The bridge forms a link between the pumping station operators cottage on one side of the river and the pumping

prepared foundations in two days.

New lighting was installed on the bridge and its approaches, and permanent water and electricity supplies were re-connected. All services were laid within the bridge structure.

W. E. WINTER



Above... One member being floated into position.

Below... The bridge finally in position.

station which is on the opposite bank.

The bridge comprises two main side members and a central walkway. Each side member was fully prefabricated at the manufacture, off-loaded up-stream and floated to its destination on air-filled pontoons.

Each side member forms a complete span over the river, the bridge being fully erected on



THE NEW COMPUTER

During the first week of September a new computer will be delivered to Head Office, and work has been going ahead preparing the room in which it will be housed. The new machine will be much more powerful than the two previous ones and will incorporate most of the ever-increasing new technology in computers.

Due to the worn out condition of the existing machine, it became essential that a new machine was obtained very quickly, and as the old machine was manufactured by Honeywell, a Honeywell machine was ordered to speed up the transfer of work already being run on the old computer to the new machine.

Many serious breakdowns were being encountered on the old machine, which was over seven years old, and it became increasingly unreliable, causing a great deal of lost time in re-running work.

The initial equipment being delivered will simply take up the existing workload running under emulation, with a little extra to assist programmers in the programme conversion work. Then, as speedily as possible, extra work and, therefore, extra equipment will be added to the initial machine.

The new machine is known as a Honeywell Level 64/DPS4 with a memory capacity of two million decimal characters (substantially larger than the existing machine), and has, as standard, various facilities such as a scientific and technical unit and terminal interface.

A lot of very hard work and many headaches will be encountered during the changeover, but hopefully we will get through without too many casualties.

E. A. CRISP

Safety and Health

'There was I digging this hole'

With an apology to Bernard Cribbins

That sentence may bring a smile to your lips as you remember the words of the song it came from, but believe me, the physical act of digging a hole in the ground is not so funny.

During the past two months, two employees have been badly injured whilst carrying out this work. Work, which many Company employees never give a second thought to, work which you see every day when travelling to the office or factory. **Work** which you moan about when it's carried out in the pavement and you have to walk around it. **Work** which you grumble about when the traffic is delayed and you are held up in a traffic jam.

The work necessary to lay, repair or replace mains or services. In many of these holes lurks a hidden danger, that of underground electricity cables. These cables have been laid without protection and when hit by the tools being used, such as forks, shovels or jack hammers, they explode with a bang and a flash.

Luckily nine times out of ten no one is injured but in the one remaining case the explosion hits the operative holding the spade or the fork causing severe shock and burns.

In the two accidents reported by Company employees, one received burns to his face, arms and chest, the other was blown out of the excavation a distance of about 15 feet and received burns to his right foot.

Both have now returned to work. So when you pass a hole in the pavement or the road, give a thought to the men that have to dig them, who can be seriously injured by something they cannot **see, hear or smell**. The buried unprotected electricity cable. The cable they hit next could be the one that supplies your home.

The Company have recognised the dangers involved in carrying out the work described above and have supplied cable locators to all gangs engaged in excavation work. A survey of how Areas can obtain better and quicker information on underground cables from their local Electricity Boards is now being undertaken, and pressure is to be brought on the Electricity Council at National Level to encourage all Electricity Boards to either protect or indicate all underground cables. Many incidents of hitting underground cables would have been avoided if these precautions had been taken.

Training courses on the avoidance of underground cables coupled with the Emergency First Aid have been arranged, these will commence in early September.

R. PERKS

nalgo

TENNIS... 4 DISTRICT TOURNAMENT

As winners of the West Midlands Nalگو Tennis Cup last August (1980), we were asked to field one pair to compete in the Annual Four-District Tournament at Cirencester on Wednesday 24th June 1981.

You may be pleased to hear that our pair were successful

and brought back the District Cup, having defeated South Wales (holders), South-West and West Districts.

You may soon be able to view the cups if N.W.D. can construct a small display cabinet for Central Office Reception.

J. Wilson

Retirements

Many of our retiring personnel have given long service to the firm and all are worthy of some notable reference. However it is impossible for me, with limited news space to give credit to all concerned and I would beg their indulgence.

I wish you all good health and happiness in your retirement.

	<i>Work Location</i>	<i>Date of Retirement</i>	<i>Commenced with Coy.</i>
Miss E. C. Priestnall	Computer	30. 4.81	27. 6.49
Mrs E. M. Adams	H.O. Canteen	7. 6.81	25. 3.74
Mrs H. M. Speake	H.O. Canteen	7. 6.81	8.12.75
(but still employed by Bromages who now manage the Dining Room)			
J. R. Greenhough	Sandfields	30. 6.81	4. 7.77
H. E. Tabberer	Walsall	31. 5.81	1. 7.62
Mrs A. White	H.O. Admin.	31. 5.81	14. 3.66
Mr S. V. Lancaster	Director	30. 6.81	23 Years as Coy. Director
J. C. Land	E.M.D.	30. 4.81	28. 3.49
J. E. Billingham	Revenue	31. 5.81	9. 5.38
R. G. Clarke	Sec. Conf. Admin.	12. 4.81	19. 7.37
W. A. Alderman	Revenue	31. 7.81	26. 4.65
J. W. Ferguson	New Works (Buildings)	31. 7.81	1. 1.71
J. E. M. Taylor	Burton	4. 3.81	14. 2.55
J. H. Bentley	Moors Gorse	31. 5.81	21. 3.49
J. P. Creagh	Burton	11. 2.81	12. 4.62
H. C. Golder	Prestwood	31. 5.81	8. 8.46
D. H. Hall	Slade Heath	31. 5.81	3. 3.55
T. C. Harris	Springsmire	31. 5.81	7.11.60
P. D. Johnson	Shanstone	31. 5.81	7. 3.46
G. D. H. Kent	Burton	27. 5.81	5. 9.55
T. A. Maddocks	Transport	1. 7.81	8.10.46
A. E. W. Morcom	Shavers End	31. 5.81	12. 5.47
S. Newick	Walsall	18. 3.81	7. 5.62
P. Smith	Seedy Mill P.S.	4. 3.81	4.12.50
A. M. Stevens	Bourne Vale	31. 5.81	4. 8.59

Deaths in Retirement

Our sincere sympathy goes to all the families of our ex-colleagues in their grief. We endeavour to publish all known bereavements and regret any notification that has been or will be omitted owing to ignorance.

It has not always been the policy of past editors to print these sad details.

	<i>Died</i>	<i>Retired</i>
B. F. Cope	13. 6.81	1970
E. T. Wall	11. 4.81	1971
R. G. Cadwallader	2. 4.81	1970
F. Johnson	9. 5.81	1974
G. H. Beckett	25. 4.81	1970
J. Price	3. 3.81	1974
C. E. Scudamore	4. 7.81	1966

Deaths in Service

Our sincere condolences go to the families and friends of the following:

	<i>Work Location</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Commenced with Coy.</i>
W. S. Shipton (Widow Mrs K. A. Shipton)	Burton	2. 7.81	5. 2.57

In Memorium. Mr W. Blastock died Thursday 13th September 1979 at the age of 76. He retired from the Company on Wednesday 17th June 1968.

Congratulations...

MARRIAGES

Clive Ferneyhough (D.D.) to Julia Price (Nurse) on July 4th at Holy Cross, Lichfield at 4-00pm.

Tony Prendergast (Safety Dept.) to Judy Woolford (Buying) on August 1st at St. Bartholomews Church, Wednesbury at 12-00noon.



FORTHCOMING MARRIAGES

Sylvia Hughes (Restaurant Manageress) to Peter Pawlowski on September 26th at St. Clements, Worcester at 4-00pm.

Arthur Worthington (Consumers) to Christine Smith on September 25th at Stourbridge Registry Office at 11-30pm.

BIRTHS 1981

15th July to Steve and Sue Taylor (Walsall), a boy, baby Richard James, weighing in at 7lb 7ozs.

TRAINEE WATERWORKS OPERATIVES SCHEME

The company's Trainee Scheme commenced in 1974, which provided a four year course in practical and theoretical studies in waterworks practice. The course was amended in 1977 and redesignated the Water Industry Certificate Course. This was to take in the reorganisation of the industry that occurred in 1974.

One of the trainees of the original group of seven, after completion of the Water Industry Certificate Course, progressed and has subsequently been successful in taking the Technician Education Council Course at Bilston College of Further Education.

Successful completion upon this scheme had led Mr Peter Lynes, Fittings Inspector Walsall Area Office, to also successfully complete a Higher Technician Certificate at Wolverhampton Polytechnic, Peter gaining Merit passes in all subjects.

PRESENTATION OF GOLD WATCHES AND THE TRAINEE WATERWORKS OPERATIVES CERTIFICATES

A Gold Watch Presentation by the Chairman, Mr E. J. Thompson, was held on Monday 11th May 1981 in recognition of 25 years service to:

Mr T. C. Adey, Blithfield. Mr F. Duffield, Central Office, Mr A. Gould, Cannock. Mr G. J. Ford, Tipton (could not attend due to ill-health). Mr I. H. Childs, Cannock. Mr D. C. Drew, Central Office.

On the same day a presentation of City and Guilds Awards were made to the following Trainee Waterworks Operatives:

J. Higgins, Cannock. City Guild Part I
 *J. King, Burton. City Guild Part I
 A. Clarke, Cannock. City Guild Part II
 B. Robinson, Cannock. City Guild Part II
 T. Woodward, Tipton. City Guild Part II
 A. Wilson, Burton. City Guild Part II
 Mr Ryan, Walsall. City Guild Part II and Peart Trophy

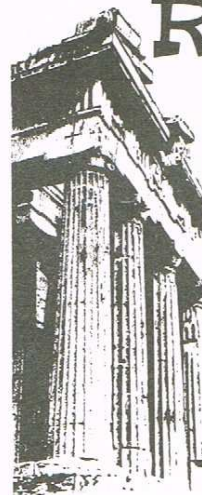
*Note: J. King had three Distinctions.

SOCIAL CALENDAR

Known Dates...

FUNCTION	DATE	PLACE	COST	CLUB
CRAZY CRICKET	21. 8.81	Walsall Wood Cricket Club		Walsall
BEER AND SKITTLE	28. 8.81	'The Fountain', Clent includes Scampi or Chicken and Chips	£2.80	Birmingham
BUFFET DANCE	11. 9.81	Pelsall Community Centre. Dance to 'Dragonfly'	£1.00	Walsall
VISIT	12. 9.81	Hodnet Hall Gardens	£3.75 (approx)	Birmingham
DISCO	18. 9.81	Green Lane (Details later)		Birmingham
BONFIRE	7.11.81	West Bromwich Booster (Beefburgers and Hot Dogs)	50p—75p (approx)	Birmingham
DISTRICT EMPLOYEES CHRISTMAS DANCE	10.12.81	Sutton Town Hall		Company
CHILDREN'S PARTIES	December 2. 1.82	Details later Details later		Walsall Birmingham
DISCO	22. 1.82	Head Office (Details later)		

Roman Holiday



Proposed trip to Rome
30.5.82 to 6.6.82

After preliminary investigations, the Social Club (Birmingham) propose to organise a seven day trip abroad to the 'Eternal City' of Rome. Subject to support the following details will apply:

30th May 1982... Depart Elmdon Airport (pm) arrive Rome Ciampino (pm). Transfer to Hotel in Rome (two star) by coach.

6th June 1982... Depart Rome Ciampino (pm) arrive Elmdon (pm). Transfer from Hotel in Rome to Airport by coach.

Trip includes seven nights bed and breakfast. Cost per person based on current information and on twin bedded accommodation—Member £162. Guest £165. Airport taxes and insurance add £15 per person.

Formation of a Football Team

That's right
FOOTBALL
the S.S.W.W. WAY

To play in a local League, either Saturdays or Sundays

Sounds interesting... then contact...

MAURICE ASBURY

or

JIM BUTLER

**At Central Office Workshops
Green Lane, Birmingham**



The Mill

The Mill, originally built around 1670, has now been carefully restored and has taken on a new life as a fully-licensed Free House and Restaurant with facilities for Wedding Receptions, Private Parties and small Conferences.

The Mill lies just off the A442 Bridgnorth to Kidderminster road at Birds Green near Alveley on the road to Enville, look for the signpost to Tuck Hill and Enville.

Friday 25th September 1981

8-00pm to dine

Transport arranged

Celia Turner Central Office 219

