



Waterview

Little Hay Pumping Station

Site of the UK's largest Nitrate Removal Plant. Officially opened by David Trippier - Minister of State for the Environment and Countryside.

Opened
12th July 1990

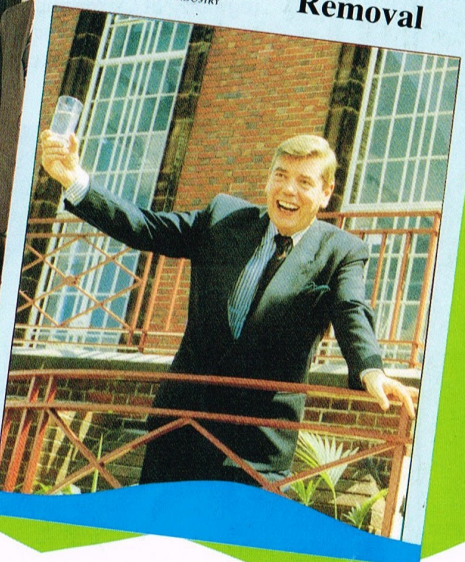


THE SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE WATER COMPANY
TACKLING THE NITRATE PROBLEM IN WATER SUPPLIES



WATER BULLETIN
JOURNAL OF THE WATER INDUSTRY

Little Hay goes big on Nitrate Removal



British first as Minister opens clean water plant

By IAN McTEAR

Britain's first purification plant for taking nitrates out of drinking water has been opened in Staffordshire with a promise that another is to be built in the county at a cost of £1 million. The announcement was made yesterday, when Mr David Trippier, Minister of State for the Environment, opened the first nitrate removal plant at Little Hay, near Lichfield.

Mr Jim Carter, managing director of the South Staffordshire Water Company, said the second station will be built at Shenstone, near Sutton Coldfield. The Little Hay plant cost £290,000 and will treat 1,144,000 gallons daily.

It is expected that another 20,000 people will benefit from the Shenstone plant, which will be capable of treating 1,278,000 gallons of drinking water daily. Mr Trippier said he believed the provision of safe drinking water was one of his most important duties.

He said: "Nitrate is a complex problem in water and lowering levels is going to take changes in agricultural methods in the long term, but in the short to medium term we must introduce plants like this. The technology is unfamiliar-

for this purpose and on this scale and I understand this plant is the first of its type," he said.

Mr Trippier also told reporters he did not believe enough was being done to reduce industrial pollution in the West Midlands. "The truth is we are not satisfied with the standards that have been agreed to be a no and there has got to be a no-tough regime. My Environment Protection Bill will put it right," he said.

Earlier in the day, Mr Trippier visited an IMI plant in which he said he was pleased with measures taken to reduce lead pollution in the air.

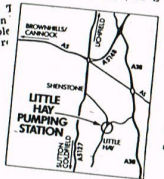
CALL IN AND SEE THE U.K.'s FIRST UNIT FOR THE REMOVAL OF NITRATES FROM WATER SUPPLIES

Little Hay, nr. Sutton Coldfield - Sunday July 15th, 2-5pm

Officially opened this week by the Minister of State for the Environment and Countryside, the South Staffordshire Water Company's Little Hay plant is

the first full-scale nitrate removal installation in the UK and is designed to meet the latest European Community directives.

This Sunday anytime between 2pm and 5pm is your opportunity for a guided tour and there will be displays of some of our other technology too - Leak detection, thrusting and the Air Knife. Light refreshments will be available and the site will be signposted from nearby main roads.



Minister on 'green' mission to the region

Environment Minister Mr David Trippier was in the West Midlands today to see how a region with a long industrial history is coping with the pollution threat.

Mr Trippier was also visiting Staffordshire to officially open a new £750,000 water treatment plant.

He wanted to see for himself how the conurbation handles environmental issues while remaining at the forefront of British industry. The Minister was being

briefed on successful measures to tackle pollution and continuing environmental problems in the region.

He visited the IMI Refiners James Bridge Copper Works in Walsall this morning. The firm plays a major role in reclaiming and recycling copper.

Mr Trippier was this afternoon launching the South Staffordshire Waterworks Company's pumping station at Little Hay, near Shenstone.

It can treat 1.14 million gallons of drinking water a day with specially treated resins filtering out potentially harmful nitrates.

'Green' VIP is making a visit

POLLUTION and environmental issues in the West Midlands were due to come under the scrutiny of Government Minister David Trippier today.

Mr Trippier, Minister of the Environment and Countryside, was making a whistle-stop tour of the region, visiting several sites to see how environmental issues were being tackled.

He was due to officially open a new nitrate removal plant at the South Staffordshire Waterworks Pumping Station at Little Hay, near Shenstone.

The plant is the largest of its kind in the country and the first to become fully operational.

It fights pollution and improves the quality of water supply.

Minister tests the water

By STAFF REPORTER

MR DAVID TRIPPIER will today make his first visit as Environment Minister to the area to open a nitrate removal plant at Little Hay, near Sutton Coldfield. The ion-exchange plant, at Little Hay Pumping Station operated by South Staffordshire Water Company, is the largest of its kind in

the country and the first to become fully operational. It can treat 1.14 million gallons of drinking water a day. Although the water supplied is safe to drink, nitrate levels in the Little Hay area have been steadily increasing.

The plant works on a process of ion exchange using specially treated resins to filter nitrates. The resins have a chemical affinity for the nitrates which are attracted to and form a bond with them, leaving the water cleaner. Mr Trevor Godfrey, a

director of South Staffordshire Water, said Mr Trippier's presence acknowledged the importance of the work being done by the company in meeting the stringent requirements of European Community regulations and in improving the quality of the water which it supplied to its customers.



JIM CARTER - Managing Director
March 1984 to December 1990

We should like to take this last opportunity to wish Kath and Jim Carter many happy years of retirement with the hope that we shall see them both regularly at Company functions. To echo John Harris's words in his message to Jim at the Dinner Dance at the Botanical Gardens on 7th December: "Thank you for six exciting and entertaining years." We expand on this in our centre pages!



FOUR OF THE BEST!

This photograph, taken at the Retired Members' Outing to Cosford Aeronautical Museum last July, must commemorate a fairly unusual event! Here I am with the four bosses for whom I have worked in my seventeen years with the Company - Jim Lamont, Jim Carter, Bill Markham and John Harris. I joined the Company in October 1973 as personal assistant to Jim Lamont (Engineer-in-Chief and later General Manager). On his retirement in 1980 I inherited Bill Markham (who became Managing Director) and, four years later, Jim Carter. I suspect that John Harris will see me out - he is a bit younger and a lot fitter than I!

Someone said to me recently (and not very tactfully, I thought!): "You must be a bit like the Vicar of Bray to have survived so long". What an awful thought - I'd always believed it was because I was indispensable!

Carole Hodgson

Happy Christmas, Everyone

Hopefully, thanks to our very patient and long-suffering printers, you will be reading this message before Christmas! Just in case:-

**A HEALTHY, HAPPY AND
PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR**

Lists

The thought of Christmas gives me pain.
So many lists to write again.
Past present lists, I search them out.
Is this what Christmas is about?
I wonder what will give most pleasure,
That family and friends will treasure.
This present would delight my aunt
But then the post's exorbitant.
These go by post and these by hand
And some I'll hide - you'll understand.
And when I've posted off my store
My husband asks for twenty more.
Then there's the shopping list to make
For Christmas goodies and the cake.
The shops are full - I hate the queues,
Who said that Christmas was Good News?
Now I can make the final list,
And pray that nothing has been missed.
The times are noted down, so then
The turkey must go in at ten.
Then time the pud, the greens, the sauce.
The wine's put in to cool of course.
"Love, carve the turkey, if you can".
Next time I'm born I'll be a man.

by Mrs. Anon!

Guzzle Corner

The Alternative Christmas Pudding

Now, I haven't tried this recipe so don't blame me. However, if like me you are fond of sweet, sickly puddings, this may make a pleasant change from sweet, sickly Christmas pudding:-

3oz. meringue shells
half a pint of double cream
half a litre of vanilla ice cream
7-8oz. mincemeat
4oz. plain chocolate
3 tablespoons dark rum
1 oz. butter
Rum to flame (optional)
half pint pudding basin



Break the meringue into small pieces. Whisk the cream until thick, then stir in the meringue. Spread this mixture over the base and sides of the basin. Place in the freezer for 1 to 2 hours until firm.

Soften the ice cream - do not melt - and stir in the mincemeat. Spoon into the centre of the lined basin. Freeze.

Put the chocolate, rum and butter into a basin and dissolve contents over a pan of hot water. Stir, then leave to cool and thicken slightly. Turn the pudding out of the basin - slip a hot knife round the sides - on to a plate lined with foil. Pour the chocolate over the pudding, spreading it with a knife to coat. Return to the freezer to freeze, then wrap.

WHEN REQUIRED, remove from the freezer and place in the fridge about 1 hour, to soften slightly. Transfer to a large serving plate. Carefully heat 2-3 tablespoons of rum in a large ladle. Flame it, then immediately pour over the pudding.

Carole Hodgson

The Mardi Club

For three months during last summer, Véronique Moireau was working with the Company at Green Lane. She lived in Toulouse but was at college in Montpellier and came to England to fulfil part of her studies. When she left, she was off to do a similar project in Madrid.

As might be apparent from this, Véronique is a very accomplished linguist! Whilst here, she wished to pass on her knowledge and thus started classes in French for beginners and improvers. Also, she held conversation groups for those sufficiently fluent to participate.

It was decided, even before Véronique departed, that it would be both beneficial and enjoyable to continue with the conversation group and, for no particular reason, Tuesday lunchtimes were chosen for the get-togethers. Hence the "Mardi" Club was born and has been thriving ever since.

Under the watchful eye of Nadine Crane (another accomplished linguist - same languages as Véronique), the group discusses a variety of topics from holidays to the

role of the woman in society (Nadine's subject, of course!) Some weeks there is a general discussion, often selected members talk on prepared topics and sometimes everyone talks about one chosen subject.

Our most successful single-subject discussion was food, with Nadine being a vegetarian, Jim Grocock being on a gluten-free diet, and myself eating everything and having to run to keep my weight down!

At present there are half a dozen or so fairly regular members, including the above, Francophile Evans, Charles Shakespeare and Carole Hodgson who sometimes slips into Italian or Greek, contravening the one rule of the club - French must be spoken at all times while "in session".

If anyone wishes to join us on a Tuesday between 12.30 and 1.30 p.m., usually in Conference Room 5, please come along. But, be prepared to "parler français" as soon as you enter the room!

Patrick Waldron

They came, They saw.... They Wondered! (with apologies to Julius Caesar!) Tipton Open Day

The day dawned at last. Sunday 16th September 1990. All was prepared, or at least everyone hoped it was. Like a bride dressed for her groom, Tipton Depot lay resplendent before allcomers. Perhaps it had never been so glamorous before, and may never be again. Nervously we arrived and surveyed the fruits of our efforts, a gang of dedicated men and women joined together with one cause:-

"Put on the Company Open Day at Tipton Office on September 16th"

Behind us now, the planning and deep discussions of what, why, where, when and how. Would or could things be arranged in such a short time? It seems, with a lot of good grace and imported experts, we had done it and here we were at last.



The hard bouncers!

Looking about us, could this be our depot we know so well? It looked so different somehow. Perhaps it was the marquees and tents, the flags and bunting, the kiddies rides and food vendors' stalls, signs and stands that made the difference for such a short time. Everything will be gone all too soon and it will all be history. But for now, let the show commence. The weather was kind, the only people to get wet today were the poor "volunteers" on the "Customers' Revenge" - brave fellows indeed! Volunteers and helpers arrived all morning. Lots of "Where", "When" and "How" were asked and lots of "I don't know, better ask..." were answered.

The "Richard Dimbleby" of the PA system addressed the gathering throng of helpers; or could it have been Ron P with his dulcet tone? People were being officially attired in splendid red and white, and then fed to keep up their strength between 2 and 5 p.m., ready for battle with Joe Public. The band arrives and are introduced to their



"Who said an army marches on its stomach"



"Of course, I can do a straight swap for the Jag"

splendid inflatable bandstand. They worry whether they will be heard over the noise of the pump keeping their bandstand alive. No problem, blow louder - you'll be heard. They did and were very much appreciated by their audience.

It is time; everyone to your station; let them come. First a trickle, then a brook and soon a stream flows through the gates. Officially welcomed and kitted out with books, hats balloons and trinkets they start to wander around all the shows put on for their information, enjoyment and education. Many departments are represented to explain their roles for our customers - leakage control, computer department with their games for children of all ages,



"Anybody seen my Hat!"

mains rehabilitation, the water bus display, customer services, Tipton pumping station and garage display. Tipton stores, the laboratory information service, the Company's overseas role, the telecommunications department, Tipton's NJUG computer information, the Company's historical display, revenue department, Tipton's water regulations department, pressure drilling display, Company lorries and transport and the Company's Consumer Consultative Committee.

Then mention must be made of everyone who manned the balloons, the "Customers' Revenge", the gates, the tombola and Blackpool rides stall and our band of car parking attendants in Victoria Park; and the dispensers of drink and refreshments to the troops.

Our visiting interests in the marquees included Water Aid, Guide Dogs for the Blind, Walsall Mencap, Halfpenny Green Parachute Club, Stour Valley Cat

Continued opposite

From previous page

Rescue, the Black Country Society, RSPB, the St. John Ambulance Brigade, the West Midlands Police information van, of course not forgetting the Langley Youth Band and, what was a great attraction, the Musical Ride by the Clancy Digger Display Team.

Our visitors' children bounced till dizzy on the castle or spun round on the fairground ride, threw their sponges at the "Customers Revenge" and pestered their parents for candy floss. We hope and think everyone had an enjoyable and interesting afternoon.

Soon, three hours had fled by. It was over. The customers departed. We troop into the staff tent for a cuppa and a few appreciative words from the MD.

Time to go. Time to look back on a good job. Time to thank all who came and helped on the day. Time for special thanks for the hard working Tipton organising committee and the Green Lane team who gave their special help and assistance. No names, no pack drill, but you know who you are. Thanks a lot. Well, you did it and "Didn't you all do well?"

"EL JAY, Tipun"

P.S. A total of £179.50 was raised for charities on the day by the Company stands, and went to Water Aid, Conductive Education and the NSPCC.



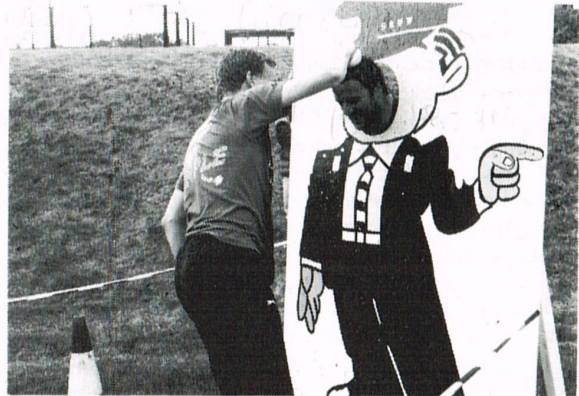
"Phew, is it over?"



A bit of a blow.



The soft bouncers!



"Would sir like a short back and sides after?"

Wining and Dining and Dancing

By the end of the year, we will have wined and dined on a grand scale no less than three times!

On Friday 12th January the annual dinner and dance was held for the first time at the Masonic Hall in Aldridge. It was a most enjoyable evening and the atmosphere and good food at our new venue were very much appreciated. It was so good that we returned there on Friday 15th June to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Social Club - here's Arthur Worthington cutting the birthday cake!

As we go to press, we're preparing ourselves for a good night out at the Botanical Gardens on Friday 7th December, combining the annual event with a farewell to Jim Carter who, as readers of these pages will be well aware by now, retires at the end of the year.



Angi Robson Hogs up on a prickly subject

Brrr-brrr, brrr-brrr -

"RSPCA hospital - hello, can I help you?"

"Hello. Sorry to trouble you but I am enquiring about a hedgehog I brought to you late last night with a limp - not me, the hedgehog."

"Yes, of course. What name is it?"

"I don't know - I didn't think to ask him. Oh, you mean mine? Robson."

"Just a minute!" I could hear dogs barking in the background.

"Hello. Well, we have three young hedgehogs in at the moment and yours is amongst them, but the vet hasn't written his report yet. Could you ring later this afternoon?"

Why am I ringing an animal hospital, enquiring about a hedgehog?

Well, one Tuesday evening early in August I was eating my evening meal prior to going to see a new play - it's first time on stage and written by a good friend of mine (but that's another story...). I was looking out into the garden and a pair of soft eyes caught my attention. It's a hedgehog! Now, what's a hedgehog doing looking up at me in the light of early evening. I thought hedgehogs only came out at night and they are usually timid creatures. At a second glance, "Hedgie" didn't look too well. In fact he looked very thin for a hedgehog and unsteady, somehow. And I'm sure I detected a tearful eye and a pleading look.

My normal encounters with hedgehogs - out in the garden late at night, calling the cats to come in - is that they immediately roll up and don't unroll until danger has passed. This one, when I approached with cat food, actually looked at me. I put the food down and it immediately struggled into the bowl and ate everything, with great gusto and lots of chomping! The same happened with the water bowl. After he'd finished, he still sort of stood there, wavering. Eventually he moved and there was obviously something wrong with one of his back legs.

Now, time was passing and the theatre visit was close. So, on to Directory Enquiries - did they have anything listed regarding hedgehog hospitals? "Which town?" Well, OK, the RSPCA then. Eventually I was given the number of the animal hospital at Weoley Castle and, after yet another 'phone call, was told to feed cat food and water. Definitely no milk and certainly not bread. I was told to place the hedgehog in a box and "Please bring it over - we are open 24 hours."

I did get to the theatre and the play was a great success. At 11.30 p.m. the question was the location of Weoley Castle! I live in Sutton Coldfield so it's a fair distance across town and we eventually found the hospital at Barnes Hill. The young man on duty welcomed me in and Hedgie was inspected. He wasn't rolling up, so there was obviously something wrong. Anyway, they said they would keep him under observation as the vet was due in because they had a rabbit that had been hit by a car - possibly with a broken pelvis. The driver had actually stopped and brought the rabbit to the hospital - all credit to him, I say.

The RSPCA man thanked me for bringing the hedgehog there - "We only have one ambulance to cover 400 square miles!" I said, "Do you mean you would actually have come over to Sutton Coldfield and collected this hedgehog". The answer was, yes, they would have come over.



Now, what was to happen when Hedgie was better? It would all depend on whether the leg was broken. If so, it would have to be amputated and Hedgie would go off for convalescence. There are people dotted over the 400 square miles who actually nurse these little creatures back to good health. Then, when better, he would be returned to the wild.

I left a donation and set off home.

Brrr-brrr, brrr-brrr - (they said I could ring as often as I liked!).

"RSPCA hospital - hello, can I help you?"

"Hello. Sorry to trouble you but I am enquiring about a hedgehog I brought to you recently with a limp - not me, the hedgehog."

"Yes, of course. What name is it?"

"I don't know - I didn't think to ask him. Oh, you mean mine? Robson."

"Just a minute!" I could still hear dogs barking in the background.

"Hello. Yes, the vet's seen him. His leg was dislocated but it's now back in place and he's fine."

"Can I have him back, please?" (a longish pause)

"Look, we understand how you feel, but in fact we'll be sending him to a much more suitable home - somewhere in the middle of Wales, absolutely miles from nowhere. Besides, you can be sure there are lots more in your garden."

"Yes, of course. Well, many thanks again..."

I grew really fond of the little chap in our short acquaintance. I hope he'll be happy in the Land of Song!

Some facts and figures about Hedgehogs

If you want to attract hedgehogs to your garden, the way to their hearts is through their stomachs, but go easy on the bread and milk - they may lap it up on cold autumn evenings but their stomachs are designed to cope only with meat. Tinned dog or cat food is best, and the mushier it is, the better. If this doesn't tempt them, the smell of a tin of pilchards is often irresistible (they have very bad eyesight and blind hogs can often survive in the wild for years because they have excellent senses of smell and hearing - it's said that a hedgehog can smell a worm when it is 1" underground!) Don't forget to provide plenty of fresh water - a hedgehog can drink a third of a litre in one sitting! Believe it or not, the average hedgehog can walk two miles during a night-time's search for food (and it can reach a top speed of 6 mph, but only in short bursts!)



Hedgehogs are particularly fond of beetles, caterpillars and earthworms and consume many garden pests. But pesticides kill their food and often poison the hedgehogs, particularly slug pellets (hedgehog-proof pesticides are available if you look for them). Farmland is also becoming more and more unfavourable and as a result hedgehog numbers are declining.



Other dangers include smooth-sided plastic ponds and swimming pools but such deaths can be avoided by placing chicken wire along one edge so that the animals can climb out. Tennis and strawberry nets also claim their toll as the animals become tangled and trapped in them.



If you nurture your hedgehogs carefully all summer long, don't become careless in autumn - remember that they often build their winter nests underneath piles of brushwood and a bonfire could be a lethal event.



And don't worry about the legendary fleas: these are a very special variety which will not bite you or your pets!

IF YOU WOULD LIKE A LEAFLET SHOWING HOW TO CONSTRUCT A SIMPLE HEDGEHOG 'IDEAL HOME', PLEASE CONTACT CAROLE HODGSON.

SCHOOL/INDUSTRY LINKS

LOCAL SCHOOLS ARE LOOKING FOR A CHALLENGE

THEY WANT THEIR PUPILS TO PARTICIPATE IN PROJECTS WHICH WILL HELP LOCAL INDUSTRY

DO YOU HAVE A PROBLEM?
(PERHAPS ONE THAT HAS BEEN NIGGLING AT THE BACK OF YOUR MIND?)

COULD SOMEONE OFFER YOU A FRESH LOOK AT A SITUATION?

THIS IS NOT AN EXERCISE: THEY WANT REAL TASKS FROM WHICH THEY AND THE COMPANY WILL BENEFIT

CAN WE HELP?

if so:

PLEASE SUBMIT A WRITTEN BRIEF

SETTING OUT THE TASK - NO MATTER HOW SMALL, SIMPLE, LARGE OR COMPLEX THE TASK MAY BE!

IT WON'T COST YOU ANYTHING TO PARTICIPATE - WE JUST NEED YOUR IDEAS

For example:

REORGANSIATION OF THE CAR PARK

DIRECTING CUSTOMERS TO THE CASH OFFICE
(i.e., SAVING RECEPTION FROM ENDLESS ENQUIRIES!)

TIDINESS SCHEMES

PLEASE CONTACT ANGI ROBSON, Extension 305

South Staffs goes East



In October South Staffs went to Czechoslovakia prospecting for work. We had heard that the newly elected Government in Czechoslovakia were concerned about water quality and leaking mains following 30 years stagnation under Communist rule. So Jim Carter and David Fifield went to Prague to discuss the possibilities of our Company assisting Czechoslovakia in improving their water supply system.

We stayed for a week, met many Government Officials and visited water and sewage treatment installations. It was fascinating to see how a production based economy has been working and the difficulties which are now being faced in changing to a market led economy. Past working practices were particularly noticeable when trying to get a meal at a restaurant! Even though the restaurant was half empty, the staff were reluctant to let us in because they were paid by the State, irrespective of the work they did!

Many of the houses are served by centralised State run heating plants and although this sounds fine in principle it takes about half an hour for the hot water to arrive each morning. So taps are run to waste.

Everybody we met in Czechoslovakia was extremely friendly and although initially we were viewed with suspicion, by the end of the trip, when we had explained that ours was not a "hard sell" approach, but rather a genuine offer of technical and managerial assistance, there was great enthusiasm.

Na Zdravi
David Fifield

A view of Prague from the Town Hall



Jim takes a drink in the beer garden at U Fleku



Jim and David with Mrs Deylova from the Czechoslovakia Ministry and Oldrich Dolezal from Zelivka Water Treatment Works

FLYING HIGH

Retired Members' Annual Outing Tuesday 17th July

"... WENT THE DAY WELL!" by Sara Stevens

A bright sunny Tuesday dawned on the day of the Retired Members Annual outing, and we all looked forward to meeting old friends and colleagues. Fifty years after the Battle of Britain, a trip to RAF Cosford was to be our venue this year, and it was like a journey down memory lane for many people.

We all joined our coaches at various pick-up points and arrived at Cosford in convoy, after the usual distribution of sweets, fruit juice and ice cream. The sun was by then at its hottest and some of us less tough headed for the shade of the aircraft - all shapes and sizes paraded outside, though many chose the seating carefully placed for us to sit and chat with friends.



The history of aviation and the complete story of the RAF was founded at Hendon, but it soon became apparent that the museum would not be big enough to display more than a fraction of the material available. RAF Cosford was one unit which has enough storage accommodation. The Aerospace Museum grew from a small collection of interesting aircraft - all cared for by a group of enthusiasts. Set in the heart of the Shropshire countryside, RAF Cosford's main function is a training role. The museum attracts many visitors and there was evidence of this as we walked around, young and old enjoying the journey through history, marked by aircraft and memorabilia from the First World War, 1914-18, the 1939-45 war and also the Falklands war. Three of our guests from Malawi were intrigued by the aircraft used in the Falklands as they had heard a lot about the South Atlantic conflict.



The missile collection was both horrific and fascinating. We could hear anecdotes being shared of wartime experiences wherever we went. I was ten years old when war broke out but came home from Cheshire just as the V1 and V2 rockets were causing such devastation over London. We had evacuees billeted on us and the local church was also used. The families' harrowing stories were remembered when seeing these models. The lifelike and lifesize models of the airmen and airwomen were so real you wanted to speak with them. Yes, this very interesting visit brought back memories galore. I expect many of you were told as I was: if the siren sounds on your way to school, decide which is nearest, school or home, then go to the nearest. It's amazing how many chose to go to



school carrying their gas mask and spending hours down the shelter singing songs. Many thanks to the men and women of the Battle of Britain who brought us safely through this time of trouble. Do you recall how the fathers who were not called up used to stand in the gardens listening to the aircraft going over and saying, "That's a Heinkel - that's a Messerschmidt"? We children were amazed at the knowledge. How did they know the difference? But they did.

I was amazed at the "Exocet" missiles that did so much damage to our ships. Many more visitors visit the museum than the athletics arena known to many of us from television coverage.

Continued opposite

From previous page

At 4.30 p.m. we were all served punch on entry into the vast hangar where tea was to be served at 5.00 p.m. This hangar was dominated by a WWII aircraft and the air-conditioned dining area specially prepared for 400 plus diners was much appreciated after the heat outside. We were treated to some nostalgic piano playing by an able pianist and singer and, yes, you have probably guessed, we all sang "Songs that Won the War". Small Union Jacks were placed along the tables and it was a wonderful sight to see these being raised and waved during the singing of "Land of Hope and Glory". I hope this was captured on photograph as I saw the very capable Angi Robson doing her rounds to give us another pictorial record of the day to be viewed next year. The caterers served us a most delicious meal: chicken soup, turkey and ham salads with many side dishes, Dutch apple pie and cream, tea or coffee.

Speeches were kept very short - thank you to the management for this consideration in the heat, but nevertheless

it was good to see Messrs. Thompson, Lamont, Markham, Carter and Harris with their wives. Mr. Phil Johnson of the newly formed Retired Members' Committee, gave our thanks for such a wonderful day, not forgetting Mr. Cliff Bateman - whom we hope will be really fit and strong again soon, and all of his staff for all the work we know is put into the day. Mr. Carter who himself retires at the end of the year was invited to come on down and join us pensioners next year. We all extend these wishes and congratulate him on arranging fine weather for all the outings under his reign, please keep up the good work Mr. Harris, all the best on your appointment.

Our day concluded with the usual drinks on the firm served at the bar in the hangar, with a time for a chat before saying our goodbyes. We made our way to the coaches greeted by our ever watchful stewards who do so much to make us welcome. Mr. & Mrs. Carter saw us off and we all said Cheerio and Here's to the Next Time. (We are pleased to report that Cliff is now back to strength!)

Retired Employees Association

The Company values its contact with retired employees and to encourage and promote this contact further, a Retired Employees' Association has been formed. It is hoped that as a result retired employees will not only have greater contact with the Company but also

with each other and that they will take a very active part in organising appropriate events and functions. The names and telephone numbers of the members of the REA Committee are given below; pictured are, left to right, Cliff Bateman, Bob Wright and Phil Johnson.



Chairman - Cliff Bateman (0562 884928)
Vice-Chairman - Bob Wright (021-353 2202)
Treasurer - Phil Johnson (0543 251508)
Secretary - John Dixon (0922 38282)

Walsall Area Ron Groom (0922 479978) Bill Winter (021-378 0529) Phil Johnson (0543 251508)

Tipton Area Stan Morris (021-588 2921) Beryl Bacchi (021-550 6067)

Northern Area Betty Robinson (0283 840451) Len Devall (0543 422857) Harry Fryers (0543 258857)

Outside Company Area Tab Tabberer (021-353 4597)

It's a small world

I first discovered Bonsai when I visited an exhibition at the NEC. I was already overawed with the enormity of the place but then I wandered into a small display area that caught my eye. It was filled with incredible miniatures of Japanese gardens, each display immaculate in every detail. Miniature trees and shrubs with leaves, flowers and berries a fraction of the size of their real life versions.

I stood in awe behind a man who had asked the price of a particularly spectacular specimen. He was told by the proud exhibitor that the display was valued at £2,800. "But, Sir!" he said, "It is 150 years old!" I was amazed when the man took out his cheque book and actually bought the thing.

This subject seemed worthy of further research so I

bought several books and discovered that each display needs constant attention. Regular watering and feeding is necessary if your investment is not to wither and die. And every year or two it is necessary to pull the plant from its pot and trim both roots and branches to preserve the miniature shape. I have bought a few younger specimens to test my skill in this art and have started to grow several from seed. All are doing well and some have survived several root prunings.

Is there anyone else out there who has discovered this fascinating hobby? One hundred and fifty years seems a very long time but perhaps one day one of my creations will be worth the inflated equivalent of £2,800.

ALAN BAKER

SOUTH STAFFS. GOES FURTHER EAST!

From Russia with Love

A Parallel Perspective
by Debbie Selvey and Tony Woodward



There is not a single person who does not have their own view of Russia or of the Russian people, and we have all been aware for many years of the most publicised Russian words, 'Glasnost', meaning openness, and 'Perestroika', meaning restructuring.

To visit the land of the 'Bear' no doubt is something we would all like to do and two members of staff had the opportunity of doing exactly this, although both visits were tied to very practical purposes. Debbie Selvey and her husband were invited by the Russian people as part of a group from the Midland Amateur Dance Sport Club to partake in competitions with an international group of dancers which also included team matches and exhibitions. Tony Woodward was invited through an American organisation, The Citizen Ambassador Programme, to visit Russia on a technical exchange.

The first impressions that anyone gains when entering a foreign country are those at the port of entry. Moscow International Airport is grey, drab and extremely oppressive. The normal routine of queueing to pass through customs and passport checks is truly unwelcoming through the appearance of a proliferation of armed security personnel and the general attitude of the officials one has to deal with. However, once through the formalities, you can hopefully relax a little when in the capable hands of competent interpreters who whisk you away to the appropriate transport to take you to your hotels.

The quality of hotels is not, of course, up to the standard you would expect in a European country, and even if the hotels are new, the maintenance which is carried out is far from satisfactory. Your first venture into your room is to establish what is working and what is missing and hopefully what could be replaced in a reasonable period of time. The food is probably up to the standard you expect from an international style hotel, but you are always aware that the Russians themselves are living on potatoes and cabbage. In venturing outside the security of

your hotel, you immediately notice the living conditions of the average Russian. Miles upon miles of standard flats, in neat little rows giving the appearance they are first in line for the next series of demolition work.

The high level usage of public transport and, of course, the continual queues which seem to be prominent at every major shop you see, indicate that the Russian people have very little as a basis for a reasonable standard of living, although it must be said that rented accommodation and travel to the Russian people are very highly subsidised. The people themselves, whether they be residents of Moscow or any other major city, are extremely



pleasant. They want to talk to 'outsiders' and discuss what is happening in the outside world. They would like to travel freely if this was possible and more than anything they want the free market which has been promised to them under the magic word of 'perestroika', as quickly as possible. If you point out to them that this is not unattainable but would be costly and, in the majority of cases, cause severe loss of employment, they do not appear to understand why this is the case and feel that once the shops were filled with all the goods everyone needs, everything would be satisfactory.

Continued opposite

From previous page

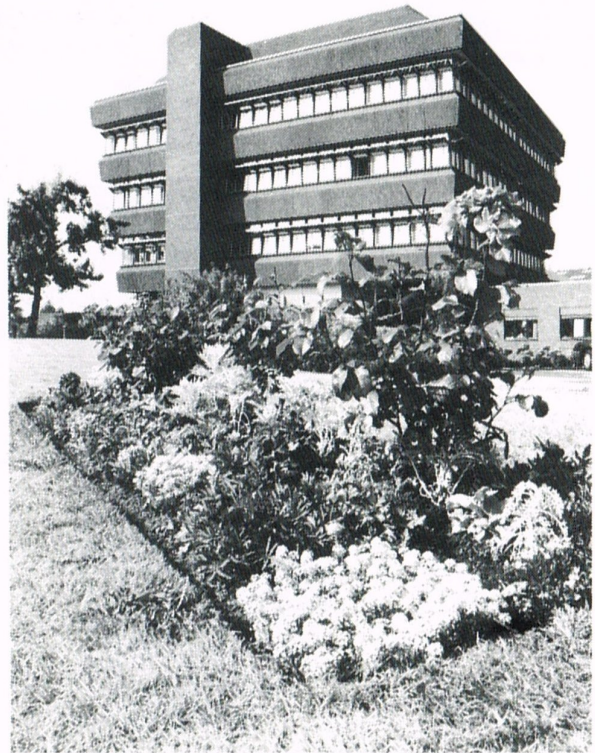
One essential of any visit to Russia is not to get involved in the black market. Although there is a lot more freedom, it is still a very serious offence to exchange hard currency with the Russian people direct and 'sailing very close to the wind', the purchase of gifts via this means of currency exchange was undertaken, fortunately with no serious consequences.

Movement within the major cities is very good. The underground systems, which are first class, are of a much higher standard than our own. With a regular service and superbly engineered stations, you feel quite relaxed and this is complemented with trolley buses, buses and taxis. Moving between major cities can be accomplished either by air or rail; each has certain characteristics which will be ingrained in your mind for ever. Flying by the national airline is not comparable to any other in the world. The planes are of a very poor standard, they are not clean and, if your seat is not bolted to the floor don't worry, as other people may not even have seat belts. You can sit three people to two seats if you like but be first in the queue or you may not get a seat at all! Train journeys are very similar, quality is down to very basic needs and considering that most of the transport in the Soviet Union has been geared to transporting troops, you can understand why. Overnight travel by this method can be extremely uncomfortable, but on the positive side they do keep to the timetable. This is because they allow so much time to get from A to B. As the average speed of the trains varies between 30 and 40 miles per hour there is no way that trains can be late even if they break down or if there is a major delay, as it would be possible for the passengers to push them into the station on time!

Although we have not attempted to cover the technical aspects of both visits in this short description of Russia, it is a country which leaves a lasting impression, whether it be the people or the conditions that they have to suffer.

Perhaps the best aspect of the visits was returning to England and to a free society.

Blooming wonderful



The Company received the "Walsall in Bloom" Award (industrial premises) from the Mayor of Walsall for the third year running. Our congratulations to John Green and Angi Robson (second and third on the left) and particular thanks to John for maintaining high standards through the exceptionally hot, dry summer.



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Jane Edwards



Hello, remember me? Let me jog your memory - up until Christmas 1986 I worked in the Estates section of the Company, under the careful guidance of John Dixon where we would do our best not to muddle Estate Committee papers and terrier plans with Consumer Consultative Committee reports and the occasional stock certificate.

You may recall I left the Company to join Birmingham City Council, where I have spent the best part of four years in a happy atmosphere on the 11th floor of Auchinleck House at Five Ways, not a stone's throw from those historic chambers in Sheepcote Street where your company was based for very many years.

Working for the Council is of course very different from working for the South Staffordshire Water Company, although I still deal with property matters. I am quite overwhelmed by the size of the operation. Birmingham is by far the largest local authority in Britain with in excess of 50,000 employees serving a huge population. Fortunately, I am involved with the administrative matters relating to the farms owned by the Council with much of the agricultural holding being within the Company's area of supply. I am therefore still able to visit part of the beautiful Staffordshire countryside of which I became so fond. Added to this, Mark, my husband now fishes at Blithfield so I still feel "connected" somehow!

Yes, my work with the Council has gone from strength to strength and I do enjoy it very much. What a pity, therefore, I had to ruin a promising career by becoming pregnant! And, on 31st March 1990, our son Jack was born at Solihull Maternity Hospital weighing in at eight and a half pounds. **WHAT A SHOCK!!!**

I know you've heard it all before but being a mother is the hardest job I have **ever** had to do - I have found it exhausting mentally and physically at times but with Jack growing all too quickly, I am truly beginning to enjoy him.

He is an inquisitive little chap with a terrific sense of humour for one so small (he needs one, living with us) and being a beginner at "life" he doesn't realise how many mistakes I make. He has now mastered sleeping through the night and luckily for me he eats anything.

I really love Jack but being at home left a lot to be desired: why did I have washing **every** day? Why did I see dust/cobwebs/dog hairs everywhere? Why did I talk about the whiteness of nappies (yes, I'm a good "green" mum!)/the contents of nappies/the drying of nappies/the softness of nappies? Why did I secretly turn on to Radio One/Neighbours/Eastenders? Why didn't I have any money any more? There was only one way out - return to paid employment.

Luckily one great advantage of working for Birmingham City Council is that they offer the opportunity of "job share" and I decided some time ago to return part-time. Job share is a brilliant chance for employees and (hopefully) employers alike and I consider myself very privileged to have the best of both worlds; a job I enjoy and time with Jack, and of course my mum positively squirms with delight at having Jack for two days one week and three the next. So far it is working well for all concerned.

Well, I am sure you have heard enough of me by now, so I will love you and leave you. I have very good memories of my years at both Sheepcote Street and Green Lane and regularly receive news bulletins from old friends of your progress and changes. Keep on with the good work - oh, and tight lines to all Angling Club members!

Do any of our readers have contact with people who have left the Company? We would love to hear about their new lives - Please contact Carole Hodgson

JIM CARTER

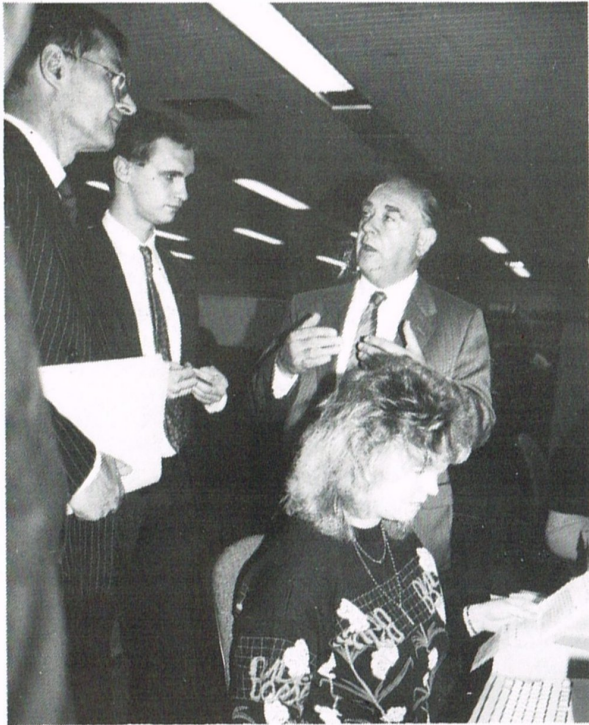
MANAGING DIRECTOR
March 1984 to December 1990

THIS IS YOUR LIFE



**THANK YOU, JIM
FOR SIX EXCITING
AND ENTERTAINING YEARS!**

The Community



With Clive Wilkinson, secretary of the Customer Services Committee for South Staffs Water.



Consumer Consultative Committee.



With the Director General, Ian Byatt



School/Industry Links

On Site



Signing the Contract for £2 1/2m - scraping a lining mains.



Jim - prominent as ever - on site at Little Hay.



One of many Directors' Visits to works.



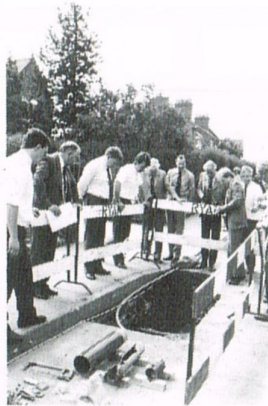
Directors' Visit to Works - Hard headed!



With Mr. Hugh Meynell, Director.



With our Chairman



On Site!

Celebrations



Celebratory Dinner in honour of Employees who served in the Forces during the Second World War.



Conserving energy!



Opening the Green Lane offices.



President of A.W.O. (now I.W.O.)



Opening Social Club Bar.

Visitors



Patrick Cormack MP (right)



John Tomlinson, MEP.



George Stevenson MEP

Fund raising



Fun(d) Raising!



WCA Biennial Conference: The Belfry



Jim Carter presenting a cheque for £9,000 to Bridget Phelps of WaterAid



David Lightbrown MP



Five employees of South Staffs Water who ran in the London Marathon.

Drilling for Victory

by Angi Robson

Drilling and tapping has really taken off this year and proved to be a main attraction at the National Water Exhibition which was held at the NEC from 6th to 8th November. Teams of two, wearing full safety equipment, had to drill and tap a ductile iron water main under pressure and lay a service pipe - in essence making a simple service connection in precisely the same way that a normal service to a house would be done. Forty teams from all the water companies took part and the winners will go to Philadelphia next year to show their American counterparts just how it is done.

Of the two teams that we entered, Team A members were Julian Winders and George Pointon, who are based at Sutton Coldfield Depot. They were doing extremely well until George, who doesn't really know his own strength, powered on and stripped the thread, something he is well renowned for because he did exactly the same last year! So unfortunately we ran out of time. Team B, Ian Salmon and Peter Baggerley, were disappointed really with their own time. Their average time in practice was around 3 minutes 50 seconds so we knew that we could be in with a chance. But, stubborn inserts caused a problem. One just wouldn't come out so we lost valuable minutes and probably that caused them to have a little bit of nerves, so their time came out at 6 minutes 6 seconds with a 10 second penalty and we came 11th, so that really wasn't too bad. In fact I think they did extremely well.

Another highlight of the National Water Exhibition was the demonstration given by the top American watermen, the LA Tappers from the Los Angeles Power and Water Department. They gave a demonstration of drilling and tapping techniques. They used a different type of drilling rig and pipe system and there were three men in a team as opposed to the UK's teams of two. Their time was something like 2 minutes 11 seconds which is quite phenomenal. A quote afterwards from the team coach, John Peterson, "We came to England thinking we were going to teach you something but your techniques are more advanced than ours and it's us who have to learn".

Part of the pleasure of that week was also that we actually played host to the LA Tappers, who were a great bunch of guys. They thoroughly enjoyed their few days' stay in Birmingham and I understand from Mr. Carter that they were almost in tears when they had to leave. The most staggering thing to them was that when they actually



got off the plane at London Airport they felt the air was very fresh after the smog and heavy air of Los Angeles and they couldn't get over the brightness and clarity of everything! They arrived at Green Lane and were given a tour and taken out to Sandfields Pumping Station to see how an area office works - that was Northern Area Office - whilst the wives who came along with the LA Tappers were given a guided tour of Lichfield and its environs. While the guys were appearing at the NEC the wives also took in Stratford, Warwick, and did the grand tour of the attractions of the Midlands.

So here's to next year and George "Who Doesn't Know His Own Strength" Pointon - just take it easy next time, because we know you can do it!



Our American competitors and their wives.

The new nitrate removal plant at Little Hay



Once upon a time there was a quiet little pumping station called Little Hay. Sited there since 1930 and serving rural areas of Lichfield and parts of Sutton Coldfield, little did Little Hay know that the decision to develop a full-scale denitrification plant on site would change its very existence.

You will probably be aware that the water industry is required to comply with the EC Directive standard on Water Quality of 50 parts per million of nitrate. Well, Little Hay was just tipping the balance on that figure, as a result of farming practices over many years which had involved the application of fertilisers around the area of the station.

Angi Robson

The Company had been involved in research over the last three years and the development of the ion exchange process and its positive benefits meant that Little Hay would become renowned throughout the UK as the largest denitrification plant to come on line. It cost approximately £800,000. This was something to be proud of, so let's tell the whole of the water industry!

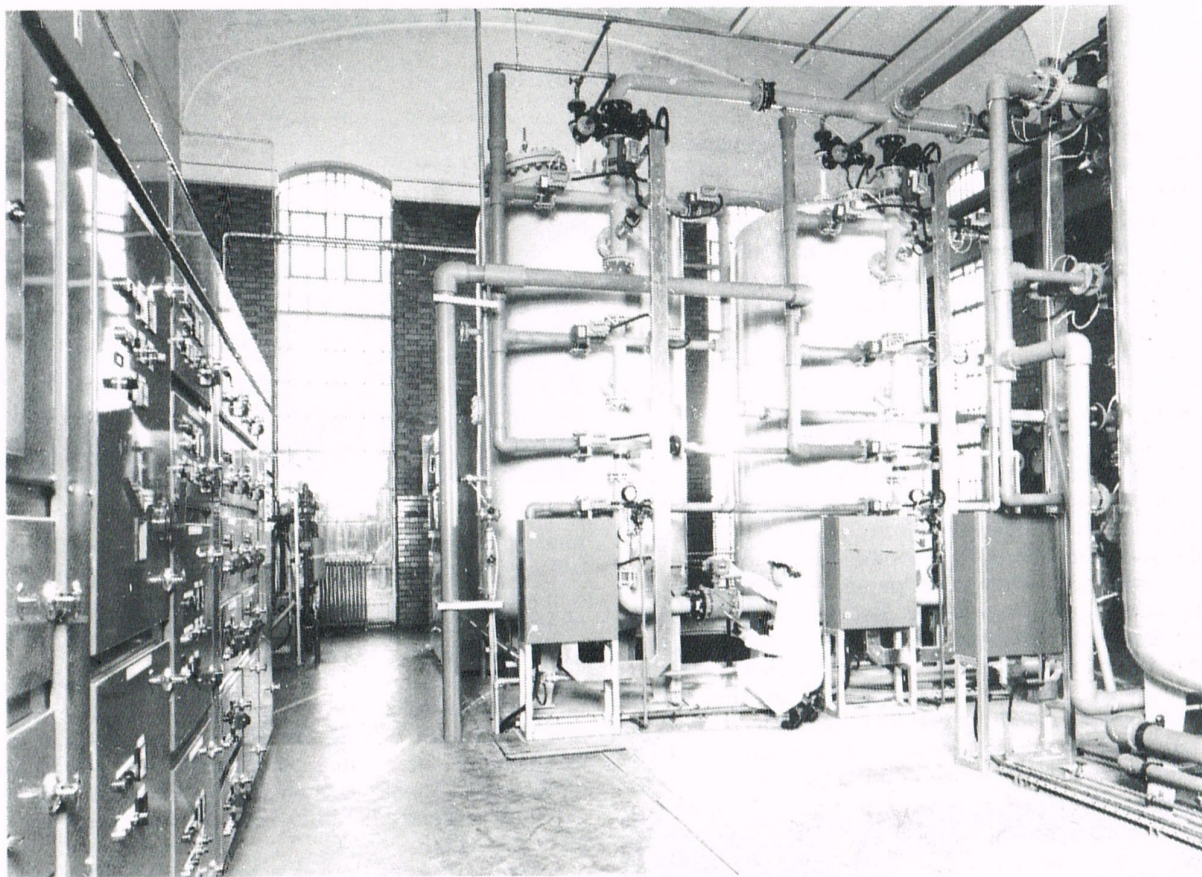
Although the unit had been in full operation since February, the Company decided to have an official opening day and, in the event, this turned into an official opening week! All hands to the pump! After an initial brief (the opening was to be done on 12th July by David Tripper, Minister of State for the Environment and Countryside), I collected a trustworthy selection of workers to bring the whole thing together.

I mean, one day isn't so bad, but whilst we are erecting a marquee and doing necessary works to building and grounds, we might as well make the most of it! So, Birwelco, who designed and constructed the plant, wanted to entertain interested water industry personnel from around the world. So, surely we should invite MPs and MEPs. So, let's invite local schools. And of course, it's the same week as the CCC meetings - so we could hold the meetings in the marquee. And why don't we open the site to the public on the Sunday? Phew, I can't go into all the discussions and ramifications - I would probably need three editions of this magazine! But, briefly, the following had to be arranged:-

Continued Opposite

marquees	site security	tables and chairs
lighting	power supplies	signs
exhibition displays	coconut mats	dustbins
portaloos	cleaning diesel engine	ground maintenance
cleaning	flowers	opening plaque
liaison with schools	food (lunch and dinner)	booklets
local press & TV	car parking	liaison with police
etc.	etc.	etc.

The new nitrate removal plant



Little Hay nitrate removal plant.

From previous page

Good planning and teamwork made the whole week a tremendous success and I don't think there was a single hitch. There might have been! Suddenly it was announced that Michael Trippier was coming by helicopter - **NO HELICOPTER PAD!** But just as suddenly, panic over, we learned it was a false alarm!



Some FACTS AND FIGURES about the plant

Little Hay pumping station built in:	1930
Population served:	18,000
Area served:	Rural areas of Lichfield and parts of Sutton Coldfield
Present output of the plant:	5.1 MI/d
Percentage of output treated by ion-exchange: (and then blended with remaining 36 per cent)	64 per cent
Nitrate content of raw water:	69.0 mg/l
Nitrate content of treated water: (average - ranges from 25-30 mg/l)	26.4 mg/l
Amount of sodium chloride (salt) used per day:	1.6 tonnes
Amount of sodium bicarbonate used per day:	318 kg
Volume of effluent produced: (discharged to public sewer)	0.16 MI/d (3 per cent of treated water output)

SOUTH STAFFS GOES FURTHEST!

Our man in Japan

Robin Comley

At end of July, Robin Comley presented a paper on the Company's telemetry system at a conference of the International Association of Water Pollution Research and Control. Robin described how developments in plant automation and computer control had influenced the design of the Company's telemetry system which now controls all our 25 source stations, 35 boosters and 37 storage reservoirs.

This is the story of Robin's exploits in the East!

Ohayo-Japan

This is a brief diary of my exploits in the Far East. The objective was to make a number of presentations at an international conference on instruments and control, and was the culmination of 12 months' hard work.

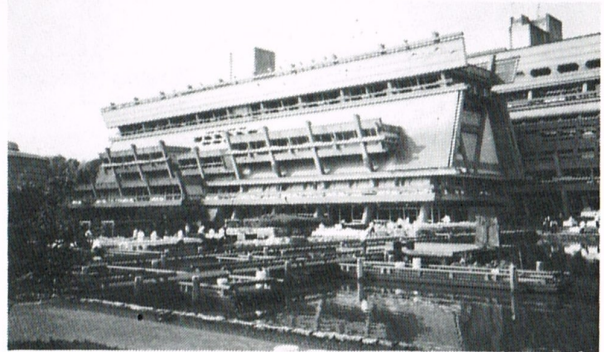
I started with writing the "paper" for publication with the conference proceedings. Because these had to be translated into Japanese, they had to be ready by Christmas 1989. I was getting on quite well with the final draft until I was suddenly asked to fly to Botswana. (It's an exciting life we lead!). It was then quite a race to get the text, diagrams, etc. completed on time and my thanks go to the Typing Pool for their efforts.



The Golden Temple Kyoto.

My work was initially accepted for a poster presentation. This means that you have a display area in which to mount photographs, graphs, diagrams, etc. and you have to be present at the display at set times during the conference in order to answer questions. I was determined to make a good effort for the Company and I put a lot of work into obtaining and setting out the material. The work was nearly complete when I thought I ought to check on the display area. This turned out to be smaller than originally advised and I had to revise the display and reduce some of the drawings at the last minute. Maurice Lees, Angi Robson and the staff at Seal were very helpful, especially in translating the titles into Japanese.

During my correspondence on the display, I discovered that personal computers would be available for demonstrations. I foolishly agreed to make use of these and several faxes later I thought I had agreed on the type of machine I could use. I then received a fax asking if I could make an oral presentation on top of everything else. Because this was quite an honour I agreed, but unfortu-



Conference Centre Kyoto.

nately, this coincided with Angi being ill, followed by the official opening of Little Hay. It, therefore, became quite a job to get the additional slides taken, and thanks again to Angi for her patience with me, and the Typing Pool for preparing the script in great haste.

I was due to travel on the Tuesday, and by the previous Friday I had at last got all my slides and presentation materials, but no air tickets. The travel organisers had left everything to the last minute and could not book all the direct flights. Thanks to the help from Personnel I finally got my tickets and itinerary by special courier to my house by Friday night!

A frantic weekend doing the final packing, followed by trying to tidy up the loose ends on the Monday and I was at last away. The flight from London to Tokyo was luckily uneventful because we passed over Moscow and Siberia! Landing at Tokyo Airport, (Narita) was chaotic as it seems that half a dozen jumbos landed at once. We finally got through Immigration, etc. we met with a small Japanese guy with a placard announcing the conference. How we found him in the crush was a minor miracle. Eventually he managed to herd the European delegation on to a bus for our hotel. We set off on the 66 kilometre drive to Tokyo when I had my first taste of the inadequacies of Japan - the motorways are useless. Only two lanes, frequent toll booths and traffic mostly at a crawl.

We stopped at a Service Area for a natural break and I was trying to fathom out the Japanese plumbing when a voice asked if I was Robin Comley. He then replied that Dave Weston (Ex NAO) sent his regards. Dave had apparently moved to Sunderland and South Shields as Chief Engineer, and had asked his assistant to look me up. (Inci-

Continued opposite



Shinkansen at Shin - Yokohama

From previous page

dently, you just have to put your hands underneath some Japanese taps and the water automatically comes out!) Four hours after landing we finally reached our hotel completely exhausted (the eight hours time difference does not help). So it was straight to bed for a rest.

The conference was being held in two centres. Firstly in Yokohama, the port of Tokyo and later in Kyoto, some three hundred miles south east. Our first hotel was a Holiday Inn and, therefore, of standard construction but with Japanese variations. The hotels in Japan seemed to be aimed at unexpected stays for business men, so a toothbrush, razor and sleeping kimono are all provided. Japanese food tends to be all protein, for example raw fish (sushi), nearly raw meat, with very little vegetables except sometimes a separate bowl of rice. You also have to learn how to use chopsticks! The hotel was on the edge of China Town which seemed to me to be the main entertainments area with innumerable Chinese restaurants. One advantage is that they have plastic replicas of the food in the windows, so you can at least point to what you want! We were also about 10 minutes walk away from the 'sea front' and conference centre. The centre was on the tenth floor of a building with wonderful views over the harbour. It reminded me of a mini united nations with two rows of seats set in a horse-shoe arrangement round the podium and screen. Each delegate had an ear piece for listening to simultaneous translation in English or Japanese.

During our time in Yokohama we had two works visits, one water, one sewerage. In both cases I was surprised at the age of the equipment. The computers were installed in 1977 and were backed up fully with individual meters, controllers, etc. They obviously did not trust their own equipment! The Water Works had a very modern P.R. centre which had every type of display including a video wall. We were shown an excellent film on the history of their company which was started in 1882 by an Englishman.



Yokohama Waterworks.

The big event of the first week was the Mayor's reception. At the appropriate hour the doors to the large hall were thrown open and we were greeted by twelve Japanese hostesses, all identically dressed in smart floor length, royal blue dresses. After the initial speeches there was the ceremonial opening of a cask of Saki (rice wine) and we were treated to an assortment of Japanese food. The entertainment consisted of a lion dance which is more of an acrobatic display.

After three days in Yokohama it was time to move on to the second venue Kyoto. I was disappointed not to have done any sightseeing, nor to have seen Tokyo but I did have a better idea of the local way of life. We were to travel on the Shinkansen (bullet train) and we had to put our bags out very early for collection. After a short coach



This is where Robin REALLY was!

trip to the station our guide left us and I was lumbered with the task of finding the seats and sorting out the tickets for the twenty delegates in our party. The journey lasted two and a half hours and was relatively smooth although with rather a strange swaying sensation. We had air craft type seats in rows of five, and various people came along selling sweets, ice creams, etc. We arrived in Kyoto dead on time and were met by another guide to be taken to the hotel.

Where Yokohama is a port and commercial centre, Kyoto is the old capital and has far more tourism. The hotel was more Japanese and we all felt claustrophobic by the size of the rooms. The bathroom was about four feet square and to have a bath you had to put your knees under your chin! Although the hotel was centrally sited near the main shopping street, the conference was being held at the International Conference Hall (a bit like the N.E.C.) on the edge of town. This entailed either a 2000 yen taxi fare or a complicated system of tube and bus rides taking over half an hour.

At this stage our small specialised conference of about 260 delegates had joined a much larger general conference of 1,600 delegates. We were allocated our own hall and poster display area, but felt lost in the mass of people.

To return to my tale, having checked in at lunch time, we discovered our luggage had gone by another route (the Shinkansen is for passengers only) and would not arrive until the evening. This would have been O.K.

Continued on page 24



Chinatown in Yokohama.

From page 23

except that I was supposed to erect my poster display that afternoon. This was clearly impossible. Anyway we registered at the conference and were given a pile of books, enough to deplete a small rain forest.

I then tried to set up my computer demonstration. Yes they had a computer, but it was located in the main exhibition area about half a mile away on the far side of the site. I managed to get my software to work, then asked if the machine could be moved to our specialist area. Unfortunately, one aspect of Japanese life is the lack of delegation. The man who does the work could not make a decision, this has to be passed up the tree. I, therefore, had to be patient and wait.

In the afternoon I had another attempt to get the Professor's computer to work, only to come up with half a display as expected. I then implored the computer organiser to let me have the machine for about two hours after the end of my speech on day four - he said he would have to check. By then I discovered that my speech had been extended to twenty minutes. It was lucky that I had put in a few extra slides just in case. At 5.00 pm I had my second poster session which had a disappointing response, since most delegates had gone back to the hotels to change for the gala evening.

The Gala Evening was more successful than the other social events, but there was still a lack of food. We were treated to some fireworks and a ceremonial dance rather like the Conga, where we had to wear white scarves around our heads rather like the Kamikaze pilots. This was followed by conventional dancing, which was fine if you had a partner!

I arrived early on day four and was delighted to find that the computer had finally appeared. I spent a session with the interpreter going through my speech and apologising for the lack of script. The talk itself went well and I ended with one minute to go on the count down clock. Unfortunately, the Japanese did not have the technology for remote control of the projector, and each presenter had to wave his hand in the air and ask for the next slide, hop-



Robin Comley outside the Conference Centre Yokohama.

ing the projectionist was on the ball. This did make life a little difficult.

In my speech I had announced that the promised computer demonstration would finally be available at the end of the session. I sat down with a small group to commence the display when an official asked for his computer back! Luckily I was able to persuade him to let me keep it for a little longer.

After listening to the final lectures, I decided to skip the sayonara (farewell) party to do a little shopping. This was wise because the food went in two minutes flat. Next day we made our way to Osaka Airport on congested roads. The crush in the terminal building was unbelievable and we would have missed our flight due to the slowness of the check in clerk if our guide had not interceded with the J.A.L. manager.

My thoughts on Japan are that it is not as wonderful as we are led to believe. There is considerable inefficiency due to the "jobs for life" concept in most companies, and they are having a problem affording their own labour. However, they do work long hours and take few holidays - typically only 7 1/2 days out of the 15 they are allocated! One day I would like to go back and see more than the inside of conference halls but I am very grateful to the company for allowing me the experience. Thanks again to all who helped me make it possible

Footnote - OHAYO is good morning - well we were close to Vietnam anyway.

Institution of Water Officers

Midlands Area - President's Day

After an early start on Saturday the 30 June 1990 members and guests of the Midlands Area met at Gloucester Docks a little late, due to delays on the motorway, for President's Day to welcome the incoming President, Bob Simcocks, for his year of office.

A short coach trip took the party to the Mythe Water Treatment Works, Tewkesbury, where, after coffee the party was given a tour of the Works. Since the commissioning of the latest treatment extensions in 1984, Mythe Treatment Works is now able to treat up to 139 Megalitres (30 million gallons) of water a day from the River Severn at Tewkesbury. This water is supplied to approximately 320,000 customers from Tewkesbury to as far south as Berkeley and including Gloucester, Cheltenham, Bishops Cleeve and parts of Stroud, Dursley.

Also at Mythe Water Treatment Works a Water Museum has been set up displaying among other 'Water Relics' a wooden water main dating from 1750 (no thrust boring here!).

It was then back to Gloucester Docks for lunch on the 'Olive May' where members and guests were treated to a short history of the boat by its owner.

After lunch, and still following a nautical theme, was a



very enjoyable boat trip round Gloucester Docks showing what a busy and bustling place it used to be and how steps are being taken to preserve the old buildings and put them to more modern day usage.

The day finished with a tour of the Waterways Museum and everyone wandered round at their leisure - some seeing what the view was like from a divers helmet and others trying their hand at steering a canal barge (some of us crashed).

Thanks to Bob Simcocks for arranging such an interesting and action-packed day out for the start of his year of office.

Graham Williams

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We offer our congratulations to:-

Births

To Sue and Jon WOOD, a daughter Laura Elizabeth, 7lb 6oz, 28th June.

To Judith and Hari SAMRAI, a son Rhys, 10lb 7oz, 8th July.

To Gita PATEL and her husband (sorry we don't know his name!), a son Sunil, 6lb 13oz, 8th August.

To Louise and Matthew BATES, a son Oliver William, 7lb 5oz, on 28th September.

To Alison and Chris WILKES, a son Simon Christopher, 5lb 12oz, on 28th November.

Marriages

On 21st July, Ron Redmond and Eunice Austin
 On 1st September, Jane Burton and Stuart Mills
 On 22nd September, Lyn Williams and Richard Innett



Ron and Eunice Redmond



Special Birthday

Our photograph shows Tony Woodward cutting his birthday cake - congratulations on reaching the half-century so elegantly, Tony!

Retirements

Stan Pearce	31st May
Ron Fletcher	8th June
Muriel Bennett	8th June
Ron Pangborn	29th September
Harry Wedgbury	31st October
Patricia Parkin	2nd November
Alan Lander	2nd November
Tony Morris (Revenue)	2nd November
David Oakley	30th November
Gordon Moore	30th November
Stan Wright	30th November
Colin Evans	1st December
Geoffrey Wilde	4th December

Our condolences to families and friends:-

Death in Service

Gerald Cresswell

23rd October

Deaths in Retirement

Thomas Reynolds	2nd June (retired July 1982)
Ann Oakley	13th June (retired August 1983)
William Derry	6th September (retired June 1983)
Leslie Torr	31st October (retired September 1983)
Reginald Malbon	13th November (retired September 1979)

CRICKET PRESENT... Season 1990



... CRICKET PAST



Do you recognise any of the members of these teams and do you know what vintage they are? We know that Mike Crowe has followed in his father's footsteps - that's Frank Crowe, fourth from the left. Aubrey Tibbenham (retired Company Secretary) is seated third from the left with Miss Clare Parry at the far right and Philip Burton next to her. Len Stone stands fourth from the right.

The Company cricket team had a successful season winning six of the seven games played. An influx of new team members certainly helped as the season progressed, due to an increasing injury list.

The first match of the season pitched us against Lynx Distribution where fine knocks by Tim Wedge and Mike Crowe contributed to a nine wicket victory. M.E.B. (South Staffs) were the next victims in the NALGO knockout, Mike Crowe again being instrumental with the bat and Paul Mitchell taking three wickets.

The third annual fixture with Wrexham Water took place in July at Fordhouses C.C. The highlight (!!) in our 37 run victory was the demise of captain Gary Hazlehurst with a dislocated knee and an ambulance trip to the nearest hospital. On the field five wickets from David Noakes proved decisive.

A ten wicket victory over Queen Mary's Old Boys followed, the highlight being 66 not out by Neil Whistance. The only defeat came in the NALGO semi final against Shropshire County Council, a weakened South Staffs side losing by eight wickets despite a good innings from Tim Wedge.

The highlight of the season was the inaugural trip to Essex Water. Essex, including two County 2nd XI players, looked a formidable outfit. Three wickets each from Simon Phillips, Mike Crowe and Paul Mitchell reduced Essex to 83 all out. Mark Hatton's fine 48 not out helped us to a six wicket victory.

The final match of the season was a 16 run victory over Queen Mary's Old Boys, this being a fine all round team performance with no-one making a winning contribution.

I would like to thank all team members for their efforts this year and wish continued success for next year. Special thanks are due to Mike Crowe for stepping into the breach so well, whilst I was otherwise detained.

Anyone wishing to play next year please contact Gary Hazlehurst or Mike Crowe and we will keep you in mind.

Gary Hazlehurst
Cricket Captain



Friday the Thirteenth

Do you remember Friday 13th July? Our troubles began that day with a fire at an MEB sub-station in Wilenhall. As a result, electricity supplies were disrupted and Seedy Mill Treatment Works and twelve pumping stations went out! As if that weren't enough, coincidentally there was a major burst on the Outwoods to Anslow main and water quality problems following the failure of the Company's own electricity standby plant. To cap it all, this particular Friday and Saturday were two of the hottest days of the year with exceptionally high demands for water! Phew!

As ever, the Company's staff worked round the clock to put things back to normal and we actually received letters of thanks in which the words **KIND**, **EFFICIENT** and **HELPFUL** predominated.

Just looking at next year's calendar - if you're superstitious, watch out for September and December!

Marathon Man/London Marathon 1990

Running the London Marathon is a unique experience - it is extremely well organised. It has a carnival atmosphere. It has the camaraderie which is always alleged to be present when people are suffering together and, of course, there is the feeling of running through the historic sights of London.

The real marathon atmosphere starts on Friday or Saturday, when everyone congregates in Jubilee Park to collect their number after producing their registration card. There are also stalls selling T shirts, running shorts, running watches etc.

On the day I wake up with a mixture of excitement and nervousness, a light breakfast is in order before setting out by coach from the hotel for the start at Greenwich Park.

There are 3 separate starting places at Greenwich, where the stations are full of people stripping down from their tracksuits into their running gear, taking sips of water. There is also a strong aroma of liniment. Outside it is beginning to rain. Those who have run marathons before come equipped with dustbin liners, in which they cut holes for head and arms, to keep warm and dry until the start. The streets are now full of runners jogging to the start.

At each of the starts there are buses, each with a letter of the alphabet in the window. The intention is to put kit bags in the bus with the initial letter of one's surname. These buses are then driven to Jubilee Gardens so that runners can collect their kit and change at the end.

It is starting to rain more heavily now as runners move to the starting point. The start is separated into sections - 21,000, 22,000 etc. I move to the 28,000+ section and wait for the starting gun.

From where I am I cannot see the start, but there is some movement ahead and those in front are poised to start. "Bang" - we're off. It is several minutes before we reach the start line, where I start my watch. Movement is very slow but, despite the rain, everyone is in good spirits.

The ground is, unfortunately, quite wet which means that most of us have wet feet. After about 3 miles we join runners from the other starting points.

The sides of the road are crowded with spectators, who are all in festive mood waving flags. The children by the side of the road hold their hands out to be touched by the runners as they go past. At regular intervals there are bands playing by the side of the road, which adds to the atmosphere of the occasion. Drinks are provided at mile intervals, after the third mile, on long tables. It is essential to hydrate well at the start of a marathon, therefore, drinks are most welcome.

The first 15 miles after passing the Cutty Sark at 6 miles and Tower Bridge at 13 miles, go relatively quickly because of the crowds, the atmosphere, the drinks at mile intervals and the adrenalin. The secret also is to keep the pace down at this stage.

At 20 miles we round the Dock area, over the cobbles at the Tower of London and I know I have run 22 miles! I say to myself only 4 and a bit miles to go. The next 2 miles are a struggle and then we turn into the Mall. This is long and wide and seems endless. I can see Buckingham Palace ahead and I know that if I get to the end of this there is only another mile or so to do.

I eventually get to the end and turn into Birdcage Walk, which looks almost as long and wide as the Mall. There is a great temptation to walk at this stage. Many people do so, but I will myself to go on. All the time I am saying "a



mile to go"....."that must be three quarters of a mile"....."now only half a mile". "Why do I do this?....."This is definitely the last time I am going to run a marathon!"

People at the side keep saying 'keep going'.....'you are nearly there'. I know they are trying to encourage me and I try to feel charitable and smile. I can see Big Ben.....can't be far now.

This last half mile seems like five miles. I am now putting on a last burst as I come over Westminster Bridge and the finish in 3 hours 50 minutes 11 seconds. We filter into taped lanes, where we receive our medals and a foil blanket is placed around us to retain our heat. We are encouraged to keep moving, that is good advice - not just to avoid congestion but to prevent stiffness.

There are plenty of drinks and we make our way to the baggage buses to collect our clothes, only to find that they are all mixed up and not in alphabetical order. This meant it took about half an hour to find the bus which contained my kit.

After changing I meet my wife on the Embankment in Jubilee Gardens, under the tree which was marked with my surname initial, where I enjoy Mars bars and more drinks and then, with a limp, make our way to the tube station and our hotel.

It is said that running a marathon always falls into three phases. The first 10 to 15 miles you enjoy, the next 5 to 10 miles you complete on the basis of your training and the last 5 to 6 miles you complete by sheer willpower. I can confirm that this is true. It is not as easy as it looks when you are watching the television. It is a wonderful experience to have completed it.

M.J. Kilminster
Ex-Technical Services

THE MBA

(Master's Degree in Business Administration) June Beddows lifts the lid...

Over the past eighteen months or so, two "new" training concepts have become part of the everyday working life of the Company, namely Team Building and the MBA. Both aspects have been the subject of speculation and suspicion by many, especially those with little day-to-day contact with the people involved. Having just been awarded my MBA, I felt it appropriate to try and lift the lid and remove some of the mystery attached to the MBA training programme.

Today few of us are not aware of the quickening pace of change in the world in which we live. It is only a few decades ago that both business life and leisure time changed little from one decade to the next. A combination of improved communications and improved technology had led to ever-reducing timespans in the time taken to create new products or services. Greater competition worldwide makes it ever harder to sustain profitability, and steer an appropriate path for a business to follow.

In this Company, many of us have personally witnessed the speeding up of this cycle of change firsthand. Privatisation, changing working patterns and new technology have all contributed to make all of our working lives vastly different. Such change means that few of us are likely to be working in the same way for the same company at the end of our working lives as we were at the start.

Such change places ever increasing demands on all of us. The MBA course, which lasts for two or three years, helps to prepare managers for the business climate of today through a combination of business studies and personal development.

Typically, managers have a particular specialism in a field such as engineering or accounting. As their career progresses they may manage first a section and then later a department. Throughout this process they will hopefully become more and more competent at managing their people and other resources. In future, even attaining a high level of excellence within one's department is unlikely to be sufficient to guarantee success either - for the individual manager or for the individual companies where they work.

The business part of the MBA course trains people in all aspects of managing a business, giving exposure to critical aspects outside of one's specialism. Typically this covers finance, production, administration, technology, law, computing, personnel and planning. The aim is not to make one expert in everything, but to give you sufficient knowledge and awareness in each aspect to ensure you take all key aspects into account in any decision-making for which you are responsible. Extensive reading and a combination of both written work and discussion in small groups improves one's understanding of what makes a business tick. Because other students come from areas different from one's own, you learn a lot from each other's experiences and expertise too.

Another major objective of MBA courses is to improve one's interpersonal skills, i.e. your ability to communicate effectively, both on a one-to-one basis and within groups,



such as groups of one's staff, groups of customers, groups of fellow managers and so on. Many assignments involve working in groups on typical business problems and situations, then presenting one's ideas formally to fellow students and staff.

Clearly, if you are to improve you need a good idea of where you are starting from. What are your strengths, what are your weaknesses? At first it can be difficult to be objective about this, but a combination of standard tests and feedback from fellow students soon give one a good idea. One soon finds oneself part of a group presenting very creditable solutions to business issues that only weeks ago you wouldn't have believed possible.

Having nearly completed your studies you must write a thesis, based on your own original research and applying appropriate parts of the course work and theories learned. The idea of this is to assess your ability to apply the facts and ideas, this being far more important than just the ability to know various theories or ideas but being clueless and incompetent in utilising knowledge. Typically this involves a combination of the following:-

- Analysis of the key issues and ideas involved
- Investigation of current literature and research on your chosen subject
- Identification of gaps in this research and then the preparation of a way of plugging these gaps with research of one's own
- Reporting on your research method and results
- Drawing appropriate conclusions and making recommendations

In all, this thesis extends to a report of over 100 pages, and involves a considerable amount of personal study and reading.

Believe it or not, despite the hard work, and the problems of combining one's work with a period of part-time study, most people find the course enjoyable and personally rewarding. Hopefully, as a result of this training programme, the staff involved will be able to make better decisions and handle day to day situations more effectively, each doing a little to make the working life of us all more secure and more pleasant.

MBA Congregation

On Friday 23rd November 1990 the award ceremony took place for the successful students from Wolverhampton Polytechnic. Amongst the hundreds of people attending were three South Staffs Water employees, who were the first, within the Company's current MBA programme, to obtain an MBA (Master of Business Administration or Much Better Academically according to Mr. James Butler, Transport). The award followed two years of intensive part time study plus several months of anxiously waiting for the results to be published.

The Civic Centre, Wolverhampton, the venue for the ceremony, was filled to capacity and an atmosphere of achievement and pride was created by students and their families and friends; all attending to share in this special occasion. Mrs. June Beddows, Mr. Mike Lewis and Mr. Frank Hall looked resplendent in their "little black num-

bers" with yellow and white trim and matching accessories, i.e. mortarboard and shiny shoes.

Having participated not only in the ceremony but also in the long hours of study I can only agree with Mike and June and extend our thanks to our families, friends, colleagues and the Company for the support and understanding shown to us during the last 2 years. Without this I am sure that the work, although hard, would have been much harder.

And finally, we all wish everyone at SSWC, currently involved in academic studies, every success and, believe me, we know what you are going through.

P.S. Did anyone see the Nine O'clock News that evening? And we thought that the cameras were there to film us. We didn't know that Maureen Hicks, the Tory M.P. for Wolverhampton, was also at the ceremony.

Frank Hall

South Staffs. Eau La La

Who was it said that the French Water Industry could teach us a thing or two? Well, what about this for a deal! We take over 4 bottles of water (Hampton Loade at that) and in exchange they give us 120 bottles of wine. Forget about a common European currency or hard ecu's, let's deal in water and wine I say!

Unfortunately this was a one-off event. The exchange was an integral part of the "Water to wine" Beaujolais Run organised to raise funds for Water Aid. The plan was simple and everything was going to plan until a few hours before our departure time. Guess what? We hadn't got a vehicle to go in! The suppliers of our promised car had misunderstood our request and had arranged to lend us a 26 seater mini-coach. So here's the problem - we need to borrow a car in the next few hours which is large enough to seat four people comfortably and carry a large quantity of wine. Furthermore we knew we would put about 4,206 kilometres on the clock, have to take it abroad and not bring it back until the following Friday, 4 days time. What a challenge! After much deliberation we decided the only thing to do was call in the services of our Transport Manager, Anneka Windsor. The little devil was soon in action and just between me and you there's something different about Martin as soon as he puts those pink tights on. I've noticed his bottom begins to take on a similar shape to that of his mentor. Anyway, talking about bums, another team member Mike Bowen "fixed it" with Terry McAllister so that we could use his Volvo for the trip.

By the way, the other two who had survived the exacting selection process always undertaken on these sort of occasions were Jeff Bishop and Alan Rogers. Actually the truth is, these three had wives who objected least to their hubby being away from home for a couple of days. In fact Ann Rogers rang and begged me to include Alan on the trip. I thought this a bit much myself. We all know the bloke forgets to shave half the time but bloody hell what about his feelings.....mind you he and Jeff are, after all, Area Managers so perhaps she's right. Drinking this wine is beginning to make me sentimental. I know I shouldn't drink the damned stuff, it always gives me bad breath the



following morning, which was some form of protection when I used to share an office with John Morrall but now I'm working in Revenue (whoops Customer Services) it's less socially acceptable.

By the way, I'm only writing this because I fear the wrath of Carole Hodgson if I don't. So how am I doing? We're on the fourth paragraph already and we haven't left the bleeding car-park yet. Which reminds me, we very nearly didn't, mainly because hours before we were due to leave.....sorry I've already told you about the exploits of Anneka Windsor earlier haven't I. God this wine's potent and I'm only on the 2nd glass. Still never mind we've only got 3 glasses in the Lewis household so after the next one I'll have to tip the rest down the drain. Well, back to the plot. We did leave the car park at some point because we arrived at Hatfield House, the home of Lord Salisbury, for what was officially called the kick-off. Not only did I miss the kick-off, I thought we were back in Birmingham, down at Villa Park because I couldn't see any football being played all afternoon (beware of the Bull I say).

The difficulty with writing these sort of articles is deciding whether to just stick to the facts so that some future historian can benefit, or use the opportunities to extract

Continued on page 30

From previous page

the urine out of your workmates. To help me make a decision I decided to ask Jack Carnell for his help. Jack the lad soon understood the problem. He decided to build a mathematical model taking into account all of the social, technological, economic and political factors. A couple of days later he called me upstairs to discuss his recommendation. "Well" he began, "I've run the model and got you an answer." "What is it" I said, sitting eagerly on the edge of my seat. "Tails" he replied, "which means you must forget about this character assassination and concentrate on facts, pure facts." "Yes, Mr. Gradgrind" I said. So here goes. Mike Bowen might have a big body frame but he's small where it really counts. The designer sweatshirt Alan Rogers wears is, I can now tell you, nothing more than a plain C & A garment with a fried egg stain on the front, and Jeff Bishop does things to his body which.....well this is not the best place to discuss this.

I'm beginning to enjoy this wine even if it's overpriced at £2.50 a bottle. Now back to the plot. The first, and thank God only night we had accommodation for, was spent in a town called Arras, situated some eighty odd miles south of Calais. I was pleasantly surprised how beautiful the town was, ideal for a spot of early evening walkies with the boys. After a few drinks and a bit to eat we all decided that an early bed time was called for - we were back on the road at 7 a.m. in the morning and knew this would be the last chance to grab a proper night's sleep for at least 48 hours.

This is when my own personal nightmare begins. Firstly, I discover I'm sharing a twin bedded room with Mike Bowen. Secondly, after we had been in the room for about 5 minutes, Mike locks the door and moves his bed closer to mine. Luckily the bedroom light is still on so I can watch him like a hawk. After a while Mike climbs into bed, picks up the television remote control handset with his left hand and reaches over and rests his arm on the edge of my pillow. "Let's see what's on channel 4" Mike whispers. His bed is now so close to mine I could see the dandruff on his striped pyjamas. That is, I could until he reached-up and switched the light off.

Now let me tell you that the French version of channel 4 is somewhat different to ours and does not show programmes like Brookside or Grange Hill. Pretending to be asleep I couldn't quite make out what programme was now shown. I thought for one minute Mike was watching a rugby match because the people on screen seemed to be in some sort of scrum. On closer inspection, however, it was obvious the players had forgot to put their rugby kit on. The only players I could see was a prop forward, a well built youth of about 18 and the hookers, two lovely girls of similar age. They were all stark naked so how any of them knew who was on which side was beyond me. I was going to ask Mike to explain the difference between the French version of rugby and our own but I noticed that not only were our beds now touching, he had stretched his right leg out of bed and was resting it on the edge of my bed. Luckily I was able to dive through the bathroom door and lock it just before he finally ended up lying in what had previously been my bed.

Anyway, I quite enjoyed sleeping in the bath even with the cold tap dripping down the back of my neck all night and Bowen tapping on the door for most of the time singing "Boys were made to love and kiss". Finally, the morning arrived and Mike made his way down to breakfast. I sneaked out and followed him downstairs. Breakfast was welcome, believe me, even if Mike sat opposite me, looking me in the eye and smiling constantly. I was glad when Alan and Jeff came down to join us and some form of normality resumed.



We made an early start on the drive down to Villefranche-sur-Saone giving us plenty of time to enjoy the lovely scenery which this part of France has to offer. We even arrived early for a reception laid on by our French counterparts, Compagnie Generale des Eaux. Their hospitality was excellent and we all enjoyed ourselves even if Mike Bowen attached himself to the North West Water team on account of a tall blonde young lady. Still, it gave me a chance to relax and explain to Jeff and Alan some of the problems I'd been having earlier. Finally we visited a local wine cave where CGE had arranged a super buffet, and where later after the speeches had finished we would exchange the water for wine. Jeff Bishop was on hand to keep reminding us that the wine had to be brought back to Walsall and not drunk there and then. Anyway we all knew we faced a long drive back to the channel port starting just after midnight when we were able to lay our hands on the Beaujolais Nouveau.

Sure enough just after midnight the Nouveau arrived stacked on the back of two large lorries. After a mad scramble, when Bowen wanted to take his clothes off and join in the scrum as he put it, we were loaded up and began the long haul back to Calais. The Volvo proved to be the perfect car for the journey, big enough for most things except trying to snatch some sleep when sharing the back seat with long legs Bowen. I would be just dropping-off when he would change positions and kick me with one of his six foot legs. I wished for at least 0.3 of a second that his place had been taken by Ted Morris, but then I remembered how big the steps were on the ferry so I settled for how things were.

After driving throughout the night we arrived bleary eyed back at Calais in plenty of time to stock-up with loads of cheap French beer. The ferry crossing was uneventful except when Mike Bowen brought the 3 of us a bottle of Chanel No. 5 each. Jeff and Alan, even after I'd told them of my previous night's experience, seemed really pleased. I knew the way this bloke Bowen was thinking and I flatly refused to accept his "little gift". A word of warning - if any of these three offer you gifts, I'd refuse them if I were you. I'll mention here they were all wearing rugby shirts on the return journey.

After a brief stop off at Hatfield House for a final farewell to the other teams, we arrived back at Green Lane late Thursday afternoon. The whole thing, everyone exclaimed, was a whole-hearted success - I have my doubts. The following day we invited guests from the firm who had sponsored us to a buffet reception to show our thanks. Mr. Carter announced that this year we had raised about £2,000 for Water Aid. He suggested that next year's event would be bigger and better but as far as this fund raiser goes, if Mike Bowen is planning to go again, it would be sensible to cancel the event and I promise to give Water Aid £2,000 out of my own money.

Mike Lewis.



LONG SERVICE

**Presentations by the Chairman
on 6th November 1990**

On Monday 9th November, nine Company employees received gifts from the Company to mark the completion of 25 years' service.

As always, our Chairman, Mr. E.J. Thompson, ensured that it was an enjoyable and memorable event for the nine gentlemen and their partners who were present. There were one or two moments of nostalgia as the "good old days" were recalled - some sadness that the days of steam had ended, but some joy that modes of transport had improved so much. We know that exercise and fresh air are good, but not when you have to ride a bicycle in all weathers, or travel from one work site to another in an open-topped lorry!

NAME	JOB TITLE	DEPARTMENT/LOCATION
Barry Bradley	Waterman	Tipton Area Office
Barry Clarke	Fitter	Central Workshops
Ron Davies	Water Service Operative	Tipton Area Office
Terry Haycock	Water Regulations Inspector	Walsall Area Office
Ernie Ingram	Storekeeper	Green Lane
Don Mason	Water Service Operative	Tipton Area Office
Ted Morris	Source & Pumping Manager	Operations
Peter Thomas	Water Treatment Operative	Water Treatment Section
Brian Williams	Water Regulations Inspector	Tipton Area Office

LONG SUFFERING

Another rare sight captured by Angi Robson - our special long suffering service award goes to Pat Parry, caught here in the worthy act of tidying up the newly carpeted landings in preparation for the arrival of the Chairman and the group receiving their long service awards.





Hampton Loade Treatment Works

Following the completion of the River Blithe Scheme and Blithfield Reservoir in 1956, it became clear that if the Company wished to increase its resources any further, the River Sever would have to be used. In 1957 discussions opened with other interested parties of the day - the Severn River Board and Birmingham Corporation (later, Wolverhampton Corporation joined the scheme) - to construct a storage and regulating reservoir at Clywedog so that there could be continuous abstraction from the river at sites near Bridgnorth and elsewhere. It was a long process. The Hydrological Survey carried out by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government was published in 1960 and supported the proposed scheme. It was then necessary to apply for powers of abstraction and permission to construct the works, and also to promote a private Bill to allow for the regulation of the flow of the river. These efforts culminated in the Clywedog Reservoir Joint Authority Act 1963. Work began that year on Phase 1 of the construction and operation of the plant. It ended with the completion of Phase 2 in 1972.

Hampton Loade Treatment Works is situated on the east bank of the River Sever, about four miles downstream of Bridgnorth, and Chelmarsh Reservoir lies on the opposite bank. River water enters the intake works through a series of screens so that the larger debris is trapped, and the water is then pumped across the river to Chelmarsh Reservoir where it is stored before being returned to Hampton Loade for treatment (the reservoir in the meantime provides pleasure for fishermen and sailors and sustenance and habitat for wildlife). Normally, water flows by gravity from Chelmarsh back across the pipe bridge over the river to the treatment works through 60" diameter outlet mains (the blue pipes in the photograph, forming the arched sections of the bridge).

Hampton Loade is now the Company's major source of supply. A maximum of 225 megalitres (50 million gallons) of water a day is pumped to the service reservoir at Sedgley near Dudley whence it is distributed to our customers in the Black Country and beyond.



RON PANGBORN

Superintendent at Hampton Loade 1966 to 1990

Angi Robson appreciated the difficulties faced by the birdwatchers at Chelmarsh Reservoir when she achieved the rare privilege of snapping Ron Pangborn in his natural habitat. We have great pleasure in reproducing the photograph here.

Ron joined the Company in 1966 and has nursed Hampton Loade through its infancy and into its maturity, ensuring that it always operated to the highest standards. On Friday 16th November, Ron's friends gave him a good send off with several farewell gifts. We all wish him well on his sail around Britain next year in the boat he has built during the last twelve years. But it's not time to sail off into the sunset just yet!

