



Customer Contact,
Correspondence Management,
Cash Control,
Quality Assurance, Personnel,
Water Regulations,
New Suppliers,
Transport
Workshops
Certificate No. F.S.21278

WaterWhat?

Quarterly Magazine
of

South Staffordshire Water PLC

Issue No. 3 Winter 1993

CHARTER MARK



Congratulations Again! - In the last issue of WaterWhat it was BS5750 - This time it's Charter Mark.

But what is Charter Mark? In the Prime Minister's words it's an "Award for Excellence", continually improving services, giving Customers a choice, being accountable and providing an all round quality service - just the kind you'd expect yourself. In a nutshell the Charter is all about raising standards and Customers' expectations.

Our Customers can now expect their letter and 'phone calls to be answered promptly. They expect and now get clear information. We have a good complaints system in place and when "Mrs Jones" rings she is treated as a person and not as an account number.

At South Staff's - that's what our Customers get.

Obtaining Charter Mark wasn't easy. First of all were we eligible as a Company serving the public directly? Having found we were - could we fulfil the criteria Charter Mark demanded?

These were:-

Standards: Setting, monitoring and publication of explicit standards and performance against these standards.

Information and Openness: Full, accurate information readily available in plain language about the services provided.

Choice and Consultation: Regular and systematic consultation with those who use the service, taking their views into consideration when setting standards.

Courtesy and Helpfulness: The wearing of name badges, services run to suit the Customers' convenience.

Putting Things Right: If things go wrong, an apology, full explanation and a swift and effective remedy.

Value for Money: Efficient and economical delivery of the services.

Customer Satisfaction: Evidence that organisations can demonstrate Customer satisfaction with the services provided.

Measurable Improvements in the Quality of Service over the last two years or more: Demonstration of progressive measurable improvements in the quality of service.

Plans to introduce or have in place at least one Innovation Enhancement to Services without any extra cost of the Taxpayer or Consumer: Encouragement of Staff to come forward with innovative ideas, changes which encapsulate the spirit of the Citizens' Charter.

We felt sure we could fulfil these criteria and decided to apply. We learnt that an applicant must pass all the qualifying criteria outlined above and that in our case the Judges would also automatically be seeking the

views of OFWAT. Furthermore, other checks would most likely result in at least one visit to the Green Lane Offices by the Judging Panel. Applications must not exceed 10 single sides of A4 paper but additional appendices could be included to support the main body of the Report.

Then came the judging! I suppose we imagined that the Panel comprised "Faceless Men from the Ministry" and/or OFWAT and so forth. However, we discovered that the Panel of Judges had Sir John Blyth, Executive of Boots PLC, as Chairman and the Prime Minister's Adviser on Efficiency & Effectiveness and Members from the National Consumer Council and Senior Lecturers from Cambridge University.

Our hopes of a successful outcome receded somewhat!

In the event we not only obtained the Award but received a commendation from the Charter Mark Department for being the best application received in 1993. An exact copy of this commendation is jealously guarded by Angi Robson and takes pride of place amid the chaos in the P.R. Department.

RECEIVING THE AWARD

Charter Awards were presented by the Prime Minister at a Winners' Conference held in London on 27th September 1993. Ours was collected by Tony Woodward, Director of Customer Services & Quality. Tony was accompanied by John Anderton and Sarah Morris. Our Chairman, John Harris, was hoping to attend but unfortunately had to decline and Angi Robson went along as the fourth Member.

The Award recognised the team spirit inherent in SSW. It highlighted that our frontline employees, those behind the counters, those who knock on Customers' doors and everyone who answers the 'phone - never forget what it's like to be a consumer.

Winning a Charter Mark Award is a significant achievement and delivering the Citizens' Charter required a great deal of teamwork from top Management down to Junior Staff.

Charter Mark is your Award - don't be embarrassed about wanting to do the right thing. The Charter rewards people who look beyond self interest to acknowledge their responsibilities to others - South Staff's is full of employees like this.

A great deal of hard work went into compiling the application and special thanks must go to Kim Avery, Sarah Morris, John Anderton, Sarah Parish and Angi Robson for their exceptional efforts. This Award was not given lightly. There were 411 applicants Nationwide but only 93 Awards were obtained.

Apart from achieving the Award, perhaps the most gratifying aspect of the exercise was the realisation that many of the practices required were already in place prior to our application.



Pictured after receiving the Charter Mark award are left to right: Sarah Morris, Angi Robson, William Waldegrave, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Tony Woodward and John Anderton.

WaterWhat



WaterWhat is produced by the Public Relations Department of South Staffs Water

Editor: Angi Robson
Ass. Editor: Kathryn Morris
Sarah Parish

H.Q. LOCAL CONTACTS

- Operations Dept. ?
- Engineering Dept. ?
- Personnel Dept. ?
- Admin Dept. ?
- Computer Dept. ?
- Finance Dept. ?
- Customer Services ?
- Quality Assurance ?
- Water Quality ?
- Burton Area Office ?
- Cannock Area Office ?
- Northern Area Office ?
- Sutton Area Office ?
- Tipton Area Office ?
- Walsall Area Office ?

Not forgetting treatment works and pumping stations.

Ha! Ha! So much for the list of contacts!

Many have asked "Where's this Magazine Angi?"

Help me produce it regularly - Volunteer to be the contact for your department NOW!



Scare me willless if you must but PLEASE don't starve me of copy!

WATERWHAT COMMENT

Well folks here's another WaterWhat - Issue 3. I asked Paul Bett (the chap who helps me put it together and who prints it) to prepare a questionnaire after Issue 4. You know the sort of thing - what do you think so far? What changes would you like to see? etc. etc. etc.

Well in view of the overall response to date, I'm thinking of delaying any questionnaire until Issue 87. Maybe by then I shall have had a cross section of articles from sufficient Departments to justify one!

Contributions to this Issue seem

to have majored on Social Events: Bungee Jumping, Raft Racing, Fun Days, Hatches and Despatches - all are fine and keep 'em coming - bless your cotton wotsits!

But what the heck is happening in the various Departments? - Nothing! I'm not only sure, I'm certain, that each Department is very interested in what's going on next door. After all it's a prime reason for introducing WaterWhat - to achieve inter Departmental feedback.

Look at the list of Department contacts in the panel on the left. Well go on - look now! See any-

body's name by your Department or is there a question mark? O.K. here's what you do - pick up the 'phone, dial me - Angi in P.R. - and say the magic words "Angi can I be my Department's contact"? And that's all you have to do to stop me wittering on in each issue - surely a 'phone call is worth that!

Look forward to hearing from you. Incidentally, have a Great Christmas everybody.

Angi Robson - Editor

P.S.: Great news about Charter Mark wasn't it! - Angi.

Kinver and Ashwood "Open Days"

Earlier this year both Kinver and Ashwood Pumping Stations opened their doors to the local populace of Kingswinford and surrounding areas.

Both days were masterminded by Matt Gold who, ever aware of centenary and special occasions, insisted that both Stations merited a viewing by the general public. Particularly in the case of Kinver when Kinver Festival Committee expressed an interest in Kinver Pumping Station being open on Sunday, 16th May 1993.

Johann van Leerzem and Matt had an extremely busy day with particular interest being shown by the visitors in the history of the Company.

Ashwood, which celebrated its 100 years to the day on Sunday, 13th June 1993, was a greater suc-

cess than we had anticipated - almost 800 people turned up. Matt had again arranged a trusty team around him including the Water Bus to interest the younger element.

Johann van Leerzem and Brian Williams (nice to see you there Bri) were hoarse by the end of the event after re-telling the history over and over again and taking the opportunity to add many anecdotes of their own - no doubt! Keith Haynes and Matt dealt with any technical queries - of which there were many.

The Black Country Society were there in force with their display on Local History, led by Stan Hill himself (Editor since 1988 of the Blackcountryman) in which our three historians have had articles published.

Matt reports that during the day

many visitors commented on relatives who worked at Ashwood during the "good old steam days". There was one gent of 92 who during the First World War was, as a Boy Scout, part of a Troop whose task it was to guard the Station.

From Matt's comments on the days he was disappointed that more Company employees did not take the opportunity to view the Stations. Some Company employees from the Tipton Depot did come along with their families but said they only learned of the event by word of mouth. I promise that all Notice Boards did display a poster advertising the days. So keep your eyes peeled - there are bound to be other venues opened in the future.

In the meantime, Happy Retirement Matt and keep well Brian.

Angi



Matt Gold, Johan Van Leerzen, Brian Williams, Mick Cawley, Keith Haynes. - Emma White is taking the photo.

A Tale of Two Bursts!

21" or 27" That is the Question!

It's hard to imagine a worse scenario than a burst on a major construction site around 4.30 p.m. in October, Thursday 28th (just about time for tea in many houses) and approaching the end of a normal working day. The site - McAlpine's, constructing the Wilnecote by-pass just off the A38 at Fazeley.

"There's a drop of water gushing out", reports a workman on site, "looks like it needs attention".

It did indeed! It was only the 27" main feed to Tamworth! Or so we thought!

Members of the Emergency Accident Pool were alerted at once and as expected "Customer Contact" were suddenly overwhelmed with calls about loss of supply. It rapidly became apparent that this would be the first major incident under the revised "Emergency Procedures".

By 6.00 p.m. (peak demand with people returning from work) Kathryn Morris was urgently calling girls back in to man the "Customer Contact" telephones. A press release was prepared for local radio stations to broadcast and bowsers were being filled to be placed in strategic areas.

North, South, East and West of Tamworth, Two Gates, Dosthill and Fazeley - all without water - about 14 square miles in all!

First the main had to be isolated, then water diverted to feed the affected areas. By 8.00 p.m. most of these had some water, albeit at reduced pressure and discoloured, due initially to valve activity.

Meanwhile back on site repair work got underway. The photograph illustrates the enormity of the task facing the South Staff's Team. The excavation was enormous. Tons of earth had to be removed - a task way beyond any normal digger. Fortunately McAlpine came to the rescue with earth moving plant and labour but even then it took all night to expose the main which turned out to be 21" in diameter - not 27" as at first thought.

Our operatives who worked through the night were Pete Winwood, George Osborne, Stuart Lavender and George Poynton. There were also Alan Williams and Colin Riley with Neil Scott to supply the Team with essential fittings from the Stores. John Mayer identified the correct couplings and replacement pipe. Dave Griffiths and Bob Rankine took charge of the repairs and Peter Norman cut the ruptured piece of pipe from the main under their watchful eye.

Bowsers were set in place by Alan and Colin. Bob Frost drove our "Monster Tanker" which was filled with 28,000 litres from Seedy Mill.



All the Team had a very difficult task and did not stop until it was completed. By 6.30 a.m. - after 14 hours - the damaged section had been repaired. Two hours later saw water back in the main after chlorination.

A fantastic effort by a Magnificent Team!

Angi Robson

P.S: Please don't moan at me if you were there all night and didn't get a mention! My apologies in advance. My pic! shows the gigantic hole. This was required to provide safe access & working area, whilst the repair was being made.



BURST 24"

Although we have a Network Department analysing information and monitoring the weak points in our distribution system, and we have pressure reducing valves balancing water flows - if it's going to go, it's going to go - and usually it's a BIG ONE!

The 24" burst which occurred at approximately 2.30 p.m. on Monday, 6th September 1993 was a case in point. This critical trunk main suddenly ruptured without warning whilst carrying water from Barr Beacon Reservoir towards Walsall Town Centre.

The incident happened in Daffodil Road and not only did half the roadway disappear but around 40 properties were flooded to varying degrees.

The South Staff's operation team swung swiftly into action, located the valves to isolate the main and re-routed water supplies to Customers in the affected area. Their prompt action minimised what could have been a very serious incident. Once the water was shut off the Fire Brigade, who were standing by, pumped out those residents' homes that were affected.

The following day the main was repaired and equally quickly South Staff's Insurers were on the scene assessing the damage to Customers' property.

This unfortunate incident was speedily rectified due to outstanding team effort and dedication.

It was a splendid performance. Well done all concerned!

Institution of Water Officers

5th National Drilling & Tapping Championships

October saw the 5th year of this Championship being contended by representatives from the length and breadth of the British Isles - well from England and Jersey anyway!

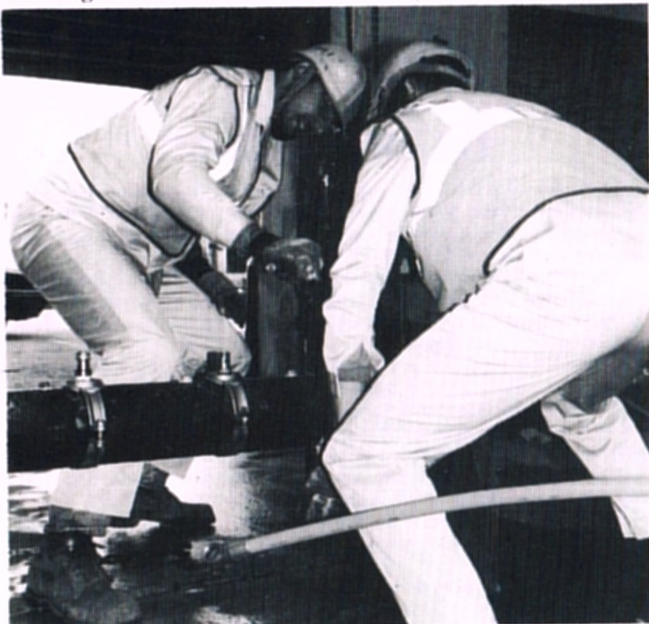
South Staffs was represented by Martin Evans, Paul Morgan and Carl Reynolds from Walsall Area Office and Peter Baggelley, Steve Broughton and Bob Laver from the Northern Area Office. John Webb (the aged veteran), Mark Jones and Pat Mason acted as a Reserve Team in case of attempts at "Team nobbling". This was considered advisable as reports were being leaked about the smooth slickness of the Northern guys and the power, brute strength and vitality of Martin and Paul - dubbed "The Walsall Wonders".

The three Teams had been short-listed from eleven original groups spread around the Company. One such Team of hopefuls consisting of Dave Holland and Dave Powell had to withdraw when Dave H. fell out of his lorry and Dave P. had an argument with a passing JCB. I would like to record our commiserations to the two unfortunate Daves - clearly they are very nice chaps but it probably pays to avoid them on the grounds that they are either accident prone or suicidal.

Final Selection

By late August the Championships were drawing ever closer and a decision had to be made on which Teams represented South Staffs in the Finals. The three Teams chosen came after much deliberation by Superintendents, Area Controllers and other knowledgeable "God Like Beings".

September saw practice sessions at Maple Brook and informal practices whenever possible at the Area Offices. The degree of commitment shown by all Team Members



In training at Maple Brook Pumping Station.

was a credit both to themselves and the Company. The Team spirit shown at the Maple Brook sessions was at times incredible - each Team assisting the other to improve by indicating areas where times could be reduced. A further indication of Team spirit and camaraderie was highlighted by the question of prize money allocation. This year the Company had generously agreed to give Polo and Rugby Shirts to all entrants and prize money to the two Teams representing the Company. However, the Teams agreed that the money should be shared amongst them all irrespective of who took part in the Championships. (I am still waiting for my backhanders - everyone knows Area Managers get paid peanuts!)

The internal Competitions took place early in October. The figure of Martin Evans leaping over the pipe whilst drilling the main was a sight to behold. The times produced by Martin & Paul gave rise to hopes that South Staffs could have a Winning Team. Timed consistently in the region of 3 minutes 25 seconds to drill a main and lay the one meter service complete with tap without leaks were being achieved. With no disrespect to Peter & Steve or John & Mark, no doubt existed as to who was the top Team.

The "B" Team of Peter & Steve consistently attained times of around 4 minutes with the "Dynamic Duo" of John & Mark around 4 minutes 40 seconds.

Kitting Out

Having determined the "A" and "B" Teams, decisions were made on clothing for the Championship. The only potential problem was - would we be able to kit out Martin? (Martin is 11ft. tall and wears size 35 shoes with hands to match - well to me at 5ft. 8ins that's what he looks like!)

Peter Worthington of Stores fame managed to locate a Company that catered for giants and Angi & Sarah from Publicity arranged for suitable logos to be plastered all over the overalls. John Richards even managed to arrange for custom made gloves for Martin as the baseball gloves he intended to use were wanted back in the States.

My recommendation of a pastel pink was unkindly rejected and the Teams decided on blue. I managed my revenge by selecting the palest blue available!

One final practice session on the eve of the Championships was concluded with a photo session and cheques presented by Dave Coldicott to the three Teams. David has now discovered another career operating as a Games Show Host and we have the picture to prove it. The final display by the "A" Team in the presence of D.M.C. was impressive and hopes were high for the Championships.

Impressive Times

On the day Peter & Steve operated as smoothly as ever. Their time of 4 minutes 17 seconds and 1 minute 30 seconds of penalties gave them a total of 5 minutes 47 seconds.

Continued from page 4

At the end of day one they lay in the top ten but would eventually finish 28th out of the 43 Teams - still a creditable performance.

Day two began and Martin & Paul were on early. They gave their all and finished with a time of 3 minutes 46 seconds plus 30 seconds penalty, giving them 4 minutes 16 seconds. A place in the top six looked possible but they eventually finished 18th.

I know our Teams felt disappointed but they have no reason to - believe me. They performed tremendously well against Teams who had trained for a whole year. We could talk of what we believe were doubtful practices by some of the Teams but why gripe over spilt milk? Our lads looked extremely professional, presented an excellent Company image and did South Staff's proud!

Photo's on the day by Angi again.

The two days were enjoyed by all three Teams and the Team spirit they displayed is well worth remembering. We did not win this year but next year - who knows!

Many thanks to all who participated and to all supporters - too numerous to mention!

Roy Jones

BS 5750. Doubts Dispelled!

Now that the Unit's Quality System has been operating for several months we have found, that despite the original doubts, the system has enhanced our operations. Practices within the Unit have been standardised, as per the procedure manual and this has reduced the scope for errors, thus improving efficiency and our service to the customer.

Terry Haycock



David Coldcott presenting the teams with their cheques.



Angi supporting (literally) the 'A' Team!

ALL IN A DAYS WORK...

The "Ups & Downs" of a South Staff's Sampler

Free at last! Well that's how I felt on that glorious day in June this year when I became a Sampler after two years in the clutches of the Customer Contact Centre.

Two years of answering the same inevitable questions:

"Why am I paying more than my neighbour?"

"I paid my bill yesterday at the Post Office - why have I got this final notice?"

"Can't I pay by instalments?"

(Not forgetting two years of being told where to shove the final notice)!

In my first 5 months of being foisted on the General Public there have

inevitably been one or two minor setbacks - melting plastic inserts in Customers' taps for example. But the biggest drawback by far, and one I'm still trying to come to terms with, is encounters with huge hairy spiders!

Recently the weather hasn't been two friendly either but me and my Maestro van are coping with fog and frostbite!

But I love being able to organise my day - it's like being your own boss to a certain extent. I collect all the samples detailed on my round sheet then back to Green Lane in time to get the tests done.

I'm looking forward to the Spring

and Summer and the early mornings again. But Winter has its compensations - driving on a cold Winter morning in the frosty countryside, watching the sun rise out of the low lying mist into a crisp blue sky.

And I'm all alone - just me with a job to do - the best job in the world!

Shelley Walker

Footnote from the Ed!

Come on folks - let's find out how the other half functions!

We want to feature **your** department under "All in a Day's Work".

All contributions to the Editor!

OVERSEAS OVERVIEW

Many of you will be aware of our provision over the years of seconded Management Staff who have provided a "first class" Consultancy Service in Botswana and Malawi. Senior Engineers from the Company have been working alongside their local counterparts overseas. Such is their success that after a two year secondment the nationals became confident enough to take over completely to fulfil the responsibilities required of them.

Our latest contract has moved Continents. During September 1992 we joined forces with Sheladia Associates, an American Firm of Consultants, to tender for a £2.6 million world bank project to supply management support to the Nepal Water Supply Corporation, Kathmandu. We competed against major International Companies and Water Companies close to home. After long and detailed negotiations we were invited on the 27th April 1993 to sign on the dotted line...!



Typical street scene in Kathmandu

Nepal Water is responsible for supplying water and sewerage services to an urban populace of Nepal - currently estimated to be around 1.9 million. Only 65% actually are on a piped supply.

The maximum supply during 1989 was 62 megalitres a day. By 1995 there is expected to be a shortfall of water available by 31 megalitres a day.

Projects are well underway to redress this situation and bring about a dramatic increase in the water available. It's a tough job ahead. The population will undoubtedly rise leading to an increase in urbanisation. Water is available, albeit in short supply, but in gen-

eral it is not potable (fit to drink) without it being filtered, chlorinated and boiled. Unless treated in this fashion the consumer will continue to experience high incidents of water borne disease.

John Bryan and Ted Gadsby are part of the Team living and working in Nepal to tighten up the system. Other Members of the Company who are spending weeks at a time over there are Andrew Scudamore, Jeff Bishop, Ron Lawrence, Alan Jones and



Water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink!

Alan Alford. I expect others will be involved for part of the time either here or overseas. This Professional Team continue our well earned reputation for working to the highest standards in both Engineering and Commercial Management.

Any news from our overseas colleagues would be very much appreciated.

Angi Robson



A new found friend for Alan Alford

STOP PRESS....

- Nepal Update

Ted Gadsby has managed to find time to drop us a line, having arrived in Kathmandu on 4th October 1993.

Ted's impressions of the Country appear mixed ones. Magnificent mountain ranges with snow covered peaks and ridges and endless panoramic views with myriads of colour at low altitudes - when you can see the view for the smog and haze! Yes surprise, surprise, even in Kathmandu they

have pollution problems.

Despite it all the lads seem to be keeping happy. Ted's accommodation certainly appears lavish and they seem to be integrating well with the locals, even to the extent of celebrating the Hindu Festival of Desain and the Festival of Lights. Apparently during this Festival every household displays row upon row of candles with each occupant endeavouring to outdo his neighbour

in setting off fire crackers and fireworks.

Keep up the good work lads! Inform us about what you're doing.

Angi

P.S.: It's always nice to hear about the people and customs in far flung Nepal, or anywhere else for that matter. However, don't forget to update us with what's going on business wise!

BS 5750



UPDATE

Latest

The latest departments to receive BSI certification are

- Cash Control Centre
- New Supplies (Walsall-Tipton-Northern)
- Personnel
- Quality Assurance
- Workshops
- Transport
- Water Regulations (Walsall-Tipton-Northern)

Who's Next

Hampton Loade will be assessed early next year.

Phase 2 - due for assessment early 94.

THE SPOT WILL FALL ON:-

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| ■ Purchasing | ■ Leakage Control |
| ■ Customer Accounts | ■ Recovery |
| ■ Seedy Mill | ■ Computers |
| ■ GIS | ■ Networking |
| ■ Payroll | ■ Training |

"No meter will be left unread"

There is no getting away from it, the metered accounts are growing in number. Over 4,000 a year are being installed in new homes and businesses as a matter of course. More customers in established homes and businesses are deciding that metering is the way they wish to go when it comes to paying for a water service.

Historically, meter reading was part of a Waterman's duties in operations to record readings manually in his "Meter Book" in addition to his normal daily duties. A laborious task whichever way you look at it!

During 1988 hand held computers were introduced which helped to ease the heavy load of around 12,000 quarterly meter readings and 100 monthly readings for our major accounts. Since then the metered accounts have grown to 38,000 with monthly accounts numbering 800 and still growing.

Keeping all this under control became increasingly difficult with all of the other pressures on a Waterman's time. We needed a Unit who would be solely dedicated to meter reading.

Lengthy discussion and evaluations transpired, resulting in the transfer of all aspects of meter reading into the Customer Services Department earlier this year.

Staff who formerly worked in operations now bring their valuable experience into the new Unit to ensure that every meter is read on a regular basis. Working together with Area

Office Staff who provide assistance with difficult locations and local colloquialisms.

Missing Meters

The inevitably missed meters are now being bought into charge. Often a meter can be situated in a field - but exactly where in the field - indeed which field! One field can look like any other when you're new to the area. Imagine going onto an industrial estate to be confronted by lorries parked over the meter box! These are some of the situations which have to be faced. However, the new Unit is getting to grips with it and intend to keep to those all important time schedules that will bring about £20 m into the Company for us and Severn Trent this year.

Steve Lane and Steve Collela wish to thank all the Area Office Staff who have given invaluable assistance during their handover period. Thanks also to Gary Hazelhurst who has unstintingly provided training and advice when it comes to manipulating the hand held computers that record and transfer all the required information.

The Unit's aim is to read all meters at least **twice** a year and not miss one monthly account reading - despite the lorry!!

Steve Lane

We must be doing something Right first time

Our very own QA Department who help and advise us for the BS 5750 applications within the company are working as consultants on BS 5750 to the Black Country Co-operative Development Agency and are anticipating more Consultancy work in the future.

THE RETIRED EMPLOYEES'

The R.E.A.

It's now three years since the very first Meeting of the R.E.A. took place and the Committee is moving from strength to strength and as befits the cliché "honed our skills". Perhaps we should adopt this for our motto!

Welfare visits have increased and each time a small gift is taken along by the Committee Member. Every Member of the Committee knows how much these visits mean and are delighted that they are greatly appreciated by our less able Members. Everyone benefits by being kept in touch.

Our annual outings this year took us through all the elements. However, the weather didn't dampen our spirits at the Three Counties show in Malvern where visitors faced the biggest rainfall which in a few hours turned the ground into a "sea of

mud". A brave few managed to struggle round.

The sea was in at Weston where a brisk breeze was the order of the day.

The sun shone at Shrewsbury and it was well worth a visit. The flowers and side shows had plenty to offer, particularly if gardening was your hobby.

Despite the elements each outing was enjoyed by all, especially when meeting up with old friends and colleagues.

The A.G.M. took place at Central Office, Green Lane, on the 22nd September 1993. All present Committee Members were re-elected to serve a further year.

All Committee Members would be pleased to hear from retired Members who would like to help in any way. A willing hand is worth so much and there is lots to do - so don't be shy.

Also any contributions for the extremely successful Newsletter would be welcome. Please send to Bill Winter care of the Personnel Department or Angi Robson -

both at Central Office, Green Lane. The eight Newsletters produced so far have provided a great deal of interest. Above all, it's about keeping in touch. An ideal way of making contact will be at the newly arranged Monthly Meetings at the Leisure Bowl, Bloxwich, where retired Members and families can meet in a relaxed and splendid atmosphere. Facilities include snooker, bowling, cards, etc. There is a bar or you can get a cuppa. Above all it's a good place to meet old friends and just chat.

The next major event will be the Christmas Dinner Dance to be held at Green Lane. It's on till late and entertainment will be laid on to start the Christmas Round of Festivities.

Sincere thanks to our Chairman and Directors for their continued support. The R.E.A. Committee wish everyone - past and present employees - A Very Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year.

Bill Winter

Jim Martin - A Lifetime of Service

When Jim Martin retired recently, it was after 50 years service in the Water Industry.

Jim was born in 1928 in Lichfield and at the tender age of 14 left School to take up employment with the Local Water Board - a Company called Conduit Lands.

Jim's long adventure with H₂O began as a Bound Apprentice to Mr. Freddie Lawrence (the Water Company's Engineer & Surveyor) doing office work, reading meters and occasionally getting involved in Customer liaison.

On completion of his Apprenticeship in 1947 Jim was conscripted into the Army and served for 20 months in Egypt and Palestine with the Royal Tank Regiment.

At the end of his Army Service Jim returned to Conduit Lands which eventually merged with South Staff's Water in 1962. In the meantime Jim had attained Area Supervisor status, responsible for Lichfield and Tamworth. By the late seventies he took over responsibility for the Cannock area and 4 years later was promoted to Superintendent, responsible for Burton-on-Trent.

Jim's return to Lichfield came 4 years later where he finished his time with the Company.

Recently Jim has been deeply involved with the valve location project, working closely with me.



Jim Martin 50 years in water.

Jim's familiar face, dedication and loyalty will be sadly missed by all who know him at South Staff's. We all wish Jim a very long and happy retirement.

Take care Jim and keep in touch.

Graham Blundy

Spare A Thought

In my position I receive lots of mail that often comes under the heading "who shall we give this to?" "I know - Angi"! I am usually able to pass the missive in question on to the right Department. Once I even received a letter addressed to Santa Claus which was passed on - I have good connections in Greenland you know!

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One such letter I recently received was from the Donkey Sanctuary in Sidmouth, thanking us for our donation of used stamps. Some kind soul had collected stamps from envelopes and sent them off from our Company. It's such a small thing to do - costs nothing really does it?

Apparently the Sanctuary has just taken ownership of 35 donkeys that worked the beach at Blackpool. The previous owner has been sentenced to 3 months imprisonment and banned from keeping animals for thirty years after admitting to causing suffering to these unprotesting creatures. In the

Sanctuary's care, I am pleased to report that the donkeys can now look forward to comfortable accommodation, clean bedding and proper food and last, but not least, kind voices and loving care.

If you care to collect stamps or make a donation, I have the address. And do spare a thought for the suffering that is going on everywhere. Try to help if you can - even if it's just with a kind voice and pleasing attitude or some "used stamps"!

Angi - SSW Lost Property Department (Letters)

WATERWHAT? Winter 1993

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

BIRTHS

Congratulations to:-

Department			
Secretarial:	Debbie & Steve Sidaway	- Daughter Serena Jane	- 26-09-93
Laboratories:	Julia & Mike Strawford	- Son Thomas	- 24.09-93
Customer Services:	Zoe Collins	- Daughter Alex	- 16-06-93
	Debbie & Adam Selvey	- Son Christopher	- 06-04-93
Computers:	Jackie & Nigel Parker	- Daughter Emily Jo	- 24-03-93

MARRIAGES

Congratulations To:-

Department		
Computers:	Barbara White & Neil Wood	(Both Company Employees)
Customer Services:	Chris Brant & Ray Chapman	(Both Company Employees)
Customer Contact:	Vikki Robbins & Neil Bedford	
	Lisa Jones & Saun Pritchard	
Tipton Waterman:	Karen & Tony Cartwright	15th May 1993 Holy Trinity Church, Stourbridge

RETIREMENTS

George Clarke	- 01-11-93	- W.A.O.
Ernie Smith	- 31-10-93	- Site Services
Reg Skidmore	- 17-09-93	- T.A.O.
Mel Morgan	- 01-09-93	- M.S. & D.
Jim Martin	- 30-09-93	- N.A.O.
Peter Griffith	- 03-09-93	- W.A.O.
Matt Gold	- 24-07-93	- Pumping Southern Group
Reg Barker	- 13-06-93	- W.A.O.
Brian Williams	- 31-05-93	- T.A.O.
Ron Turner	- 18-02-93	- Telecomms
Norma Allen	- 28-02-93	- Transport
Kevin Whelan	- 28-02-93	- Pipe Stores
Ben Cartwright	- 09-04-93	- T.A.O.
Ivor Simkins	- 30-04-93	- T.A.O.
Maurice Maddox	- 17-08-93	- Northern Group Pumping
Joe Simpson	- 30-11-93	- W.A.O.

Death In Service

Pat Whitehouse - 19-08-93 - Customer Services

HAPPY ENDING

Congratulations to Kath & Pete Pilsworth



Kevin at 7 1/2 months old

In July this year the Chequers Pub at Hopwas was the venue for a celebration of a very special kind for Kath & Pete. After many years of fostering, young Kevin legally became a "Pilsworth".

The Pilsworths started fostering in 1987 after finding out that it would be impossible for them to have the baby they wanted so much. Under the circumstances fostering seemed a natural step and many children were lovingly cared for by Kath & Pete - both short and long term.

In November 1988 Kevin arrived. He was immediately "Special". Kath & Peter thought that adoption might be possible but they didn't want to hope too much - just in case.

Then on the 13th July 1993 it became official. Kevin became their very own.

We all send our sincere good wishes for the future to the Pilsworths (all three of them) plus their extended family - Kath & Peter are still fostering some lucky youngsters.

Angi Robson

Forthcoming Events

1994

January

Sat	1	Blithfield Walk	Patrick Waldron
Sun	2	Pantomine	Rose Russell
Sun	9	Mencap Party	Rose Russell
Fri	14	War Babies	Joan Hewitt

February

Live Music at Green Lane Shelley Walker

March

Sat	12	London Theatre Trip	Gary Hazelhurst
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Happy retirement to Maurice Maddox from Brindley Bank

Spotlight on Michelle McLellan

South Staff's very own Olympic hopeful

Earlier this year, Michelle from the Customer Contact Centre was selected to represent Great Britain in the World Triathlon Championships in Manchester.

The Triathlon combining three tough sporting disciplines of swimming, cycling and running is a relatively new event in International Competitions and the Manchester meeting was only the 5th World Championships ever held. However, Triathlon will be included in next year's Commonwealth Games but has yet to be included as an Olympic Sport.

The Manchester event was Michelle's first International Competition and was held on a week-end in August. After a Friday evening carnival, Saturday was set aside as a rest day before the gruelling event on the Sunday - 6.00 a.m. registration - 9.45 a.m. start.

250 Competitors lined up for the first leg - a 1500 metre swim in the "oh so cold" waters of a Bolton reservoir (luckily in a wet suit).

Being grabbed and jostled in the water during the swimming leg of the competition was quite unnerving for Michelle but having completed the first leg, it was a quick wiggle out of her wet suit, leap onto her cycle and away on the 40 Km. leg to Manchester. The transition from cycle to running shoes was easy compared with trying to discard a wet suit.

The total course time for Michelle was 2 hours 26 minutes. Perhaps, more importantly, she finished 19th overall out of 250 competitors so I reckon we shall be hearing a lot more of this determined young lady.

Good Luck Michelle.

May all the sponsors continue with their support and here's to you and New Zealand 1994 - venue of the next World Championships.

Editor



Michelle in action during the Swindon Triathlon. - Photo by Mike Nicholson.

Fund Raising Bungee Jump

"How was it for you"? Asked Chris one Wednesday lunchtime. "Well", I replied, "the worst bit was looking down and seeing how small everything appeared".

We were of course referring to the previous Sunday when Chris Albutt, Jane Mills and myself decided to jump 180ft off a crane attached to a bit of elastic. All in aid of Kidney Research. Before we did the actual jump there were lengthy discussions with the "Jump Master" regarding safety and Life Insurance! Assuring us that if anything were to go wrong there would be nothing to worry about! Body bags were close to hand. Also that the numbers written all over our hands were purely for identification purposes. "It makes it easier than working from



Emma



Jane Mills, Customer contact

dental records" - nothing like a little reassurance!

So after we had removed all false limbs and teeth and of course signed the Declaration Form stating that whatever happened we would not sue, one last try to bribe Euro Bungee into letting us buy the Certificate instead of doing the dreaded deed. The jump was over for us all in a matter of seconds.

Ecstasy on elastic is how it was described to us by the Crew but unfortunately I cannot quote you our reaction after the jump!

A good day was had by all - well we are here to tell the story and we also managed to raise £137.00 for Kidney Research.

Emma Birch

SPORTS DAY '93

Earlier this year things looked bleak for the Annual Sporting Challenge between Essex, Suffolk and South Staff's. Essex had been very apologetic but explained that due to "budget cuts" they would not be able to host the Competition this year.

Not wishing to disappoint the enthusiasts from South Staff's we decided to contact Bristol Water and throw down the gauntlet for a Challenge in September. In the meantime, however, "Essex Man" (or woman) must have paid their Water Rates since our old adversaries re-contacted us and said they had solved their fiscal problems and a Sports Day was on for the 14th August at Marconi in Essex. Needless to say we went into "immediate training"!

On the day we set out from Green Lane and after an uneventful journey arrived around midday where we were met at the Sports Ground by Mike Bish. The weather had been abysmal for the past few days and on the journey down we had already reconciled ourselves to the prospect of a good soaking. However, true to form the weather had cleared up and the sun decided to shine on the righteous ones of South Staff's.

This was our third visit to Essex and in the previous two Challenges we had carried away the honours in the majority of events. This year, however, we were only successful in the Hockey and the Tug of War but we partially got our own back when Jason Vigrass scooped 2nd Prize in "their raffle".

The Competition and Social Evening afterwards was thoroughly enjoyable, although we were a little disappointed at not performing better on the day. We did wonder whether the "budget cut episode" was a ploy by Essex Water to interrupt our "intensive training programme"! We have reached no firm conclusion on that one yet. We are now looking forward to Sports Day 1994 which

may possibly see a new format with even more fun events. Word is here could even be some Water Sports.

It's a great fun day out and all Company employees are welcome to compete or just come along to cheer.

Watch this space for more details.

Rob Sawle



Donna Morgan, Louise Parker, Rachel Barber, Kate Higgs, Kim Avery, Annette Barnes, Shelly Walker, Simone Jones.

Raft Race - 20th June 1993

Ironbridge to Bridgnorth

Once again the employees from South Staff's willingly gave up their time to endure the masochistic antics of half drowning, missile attacks and boarding parties.

Where did all this happen? The Persian Gulf? The High Seas? No! - It happens on the River Severn each year for charity.

South Staff's fleet of rafts set forth from Ironbridge "Coalbrookdale" for their 10 mile ordeal of "running the gauntlet" of rotten eggs, bags of flower and rampant boarding parties, grappling to acquire the much prized plastic bucket - the "exocets" of

the Raft Race.

The intrepid crews zig zagged and careered down the River Severn, steering a course that would have made Columbus dizzy (and proud) as all craft entered by the Company crossed the finishing line at Bridgnorth - safe but soaking wet.

Who said it would be a pleasant paddle down the river with "FRIENDS"? But after all it was good fun and in a good cause with a barbecue for all to restore stamina and warm chilled homes.

Ed's Comments: Well done all pis... (sorry) persistent paddlers!



Look - no hands!



What's happened to the ears?

CHELMARSH FUN DAY

IT WAS A QUIET GENTLE DAY - for those who just turned up. It was slightly overcast with some good sunny periods.

The build-up and preparations were anything but quiet for Patrick Waldron, Barbara Roberts and their Team and last but not least Tim Fletcher.

Amusements were laid on to partake of or not (as the case may be).

Face Painting proved extremely popular up to the age of 10 - as did the Nature Trail. For the hardier of those amongst us there was the Bucking Bronco and Joan Hewitt's Horseshoe Tossing (Joan has good connections with horses). Considering the weight and size of the shoes, some of them must have been carthorses!! Archery proved a firm favourite with adults and children alike. Several of the youngsters seemed keen to take up the sport. The Bar-Fly Jumping also proved a great success.

The Jazz Band and American Square Dancers provided on and off entertainment throughout the day.

Alan Bellamy's Steam Railway was kept busy all day. The Sailing Club laid on Cruises around Chelmarsh and many visitors tried their hand at Sailing.

The Fishing Club were all prepared to cast and discuss techniques but there didn't seem to be any budding J.R. Hartleys amongst our employees!

The Air Ambulance arrived dramatically



The bucking bronco claims another victim!

and created much interest. It had to leave for an emergency at Symmonds Yat but very kindly flew over Chelmarsh on its return.

Thanks go to the organisers and helpers. The Sailing Club for opening the bar and providing specialist help and equipment. The tireless efforts of Emma, Mick and Roy who transported everyone backwards and forwards endlessly in the mini-buses. A thankless task but without them - well it would have been a very long walk. Each bus clocked up 80 miles.

The biggest disappointment was the organisation of the food. There were many people who failed to eat. The organisers know what went wrong and are determined it won't happen next year - that's a promise!

Apologies to all except those who were first in the queue.

There were a few winners on the day and prizes were awarded to:

Fiona Price Ladies' Archery
Mike Hinton Men's Archery

(In fact Mike has taken Archery so seriously that Mary is very concerned he may move to Nottingham! He is now a member of Penkridge Archery Club and competing for the Club along with son Alex).

Amy Dolamore Horse Shoe Tossing of the Day

Tipton Team of:
Jeff Bishop }
Clive Fennyhough } Kayak Race
Kevin Watkins }
Andy Mack }

Catherine Hurst }
Claire McAllister } Treasure Hunt

Again "Thank You" to everyone who supported us and made the effort worthwhile.

Compiled by Angi - Information by Tim Fletcher.



Just one of the canoe races



A good day for all the family. Alan Bellamy Hamptonloade turned up trumps with his miniature steam engine.

South Staffs Rugby

Following the Summer issue of "WaterWhat" the Company Rugby team have now played a couple more matches. Interest is increasing and we now have around 20 people who train together and play in matches.

Fixtures are currently being arranged for this Season, details of which will be displayed on the Social Club notice board. If you are interested in playing, please contact either Tim Fletcher or myself. We are based at the Green Lane Office.

A third fixture is being arranged with the M.E.B. for the New Year and this almost certainly promises to be a grudge match!

We now have our own rugby shirts in green and yellow which sport an embroidered Company Crest. These unique shirts are available for sale. For full details contact either Rob Sawle or Tim Fletcher at Green Lane. All proceeds will go into the R.U.F.C. funds.

Incidentally, the lads would really appreciate some support. It's very encouraging to see some friendly faces on the touch line. Why not come along?

Rob Sawle

And last but by no means least - A Very Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year to everyone!