

WaterWhat?



South Staffordshire Water PLC

Issue No. 7

Winter 1997



Inside the Engine House at Sandfields



Editor: Angi Robson

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WATERWHAT COMMENT

I decided to invite our M.D., David Penna, "to do" an item for this Magazine. Now he's stolen my thunder and covered just about every item that I was considering hanging my comments on!

No - I did not make the decision or press the button but I did have the privilege of preparing an Exhibition and Commemorative Booklet (the one you have along with WaterWhat).

I think its quite something for a Water Company to make a decision such as closing its first ever Pumping Station. Really it's the end of an era! Hopefully, the Station and Beam Engine that remain will stand as a landmark to the proud traditions that were in the past and are today - our Company!

I suppose the one project that I feel competent to comment on is the one I recently had a major involvement with for a brief time; the closure of Sandfields Pumping Station.

The Exhibition and Pumping Station were opened and closed simultaneously by "Mr. Newsround" himself - John Craven.

Angi Robson
Editor

A VIEW FROM THE TOP

As I write this article, it occurs to me that I have been in post here for over a year. The time has flown by, in what appears to be a matter of weeks, and it's tempting to think that little has happened in that time.

However, on reflection, the Company has achieved a great deal during this period and it is worth recording some of the highlights here. We have achieved a number of "firsts," for example:-

- Our first new Area Office "in living memory" at Fradley Park - now nearing completion.
- Our first Lady Director, Dr. Elizabeth Swarbrick.
- Our first trunk mains link to the Uttoxeter area (taken over in the 1960s).
- As part of the above, our first link between the River Severn scheme and Blithfield Reservoir.
- Our first Dissolved Air Flotation Plant at Seedy Mill.
- Our first acquisition of a major business - Mechanised Industries Limited in Telford.

There have been a number of other significant happenings; including the re-award of the Customer Charter Mark, the development of a £3m. Power Station at Hampton Loade, refurbishment of Southern Area Office at Tipton and the continuing rapid growth of the non-core businesses. We have also ceased using the Company's first source at Sandfields in Lichfield. The original scheme, commenced in 1853, brought water from Lichfield to the Black Country and was later extended to take water

from the Stowe and Minster Pools in Lichfield and from the reservoir at Hanch Hall - all of which are now decommissioned.

During my year here, I have had the pleasure of meeting most of the readers of this Magazine including those at Green Lane, Burton, Lichfield and Tipton and at our various Treatment Works. Also many of our retired Members who were kind enough to invite me to some of their annual outings. I have also had the pleasure of meeting two Deputy Prime Ministers; Michael Hestletine and John Prescott plus a number of local businessmen through my involvement with the Boards of the Walsall Training and Enterprise Council, the Walsall Young Enterprise Initiative, the CBI Black Country Steering Group and various Chambers of Commerce in Walsall, Tamworth and Burton.

The core business continues to provide an excellent level of service to our Customers at, overall, the lowest prices in the Country. But we must not be complacent. Two reports published recently by OFWAT, the Levels of Service Report and the Leakage Report, show that we have slipped from our previous position at the "top of the league." This just demonstrates what a competitive world the Water Industry has become and that we cannot afford to relax our standards for even a moment.

I know that you are as committed as I am to maintaining the excellence for which this Company is renowned and I look forward to working with you all to achieve this challenging objective.

David Penna



PROFILING LIZ SWARBRICK

SOUTH STAFFS FIRST LADY DIRECTOR

Liz first started with the Company in 1989 when she was given a two year temporary contract to conduct research into Nitrate removal.

Her work obviously impressed because she was offered a permanent position a year later, initially researching water treatment aspects, and later more generally into water quality.

Liz's own qualities obviously shone through as she eventually assumed responsibility for water treatment for the Company when she was appointed Principal Treatment Chemist - one of three principal scientists heading a section of around fifteen people and becoming increasingly involved in a greater managerial role.

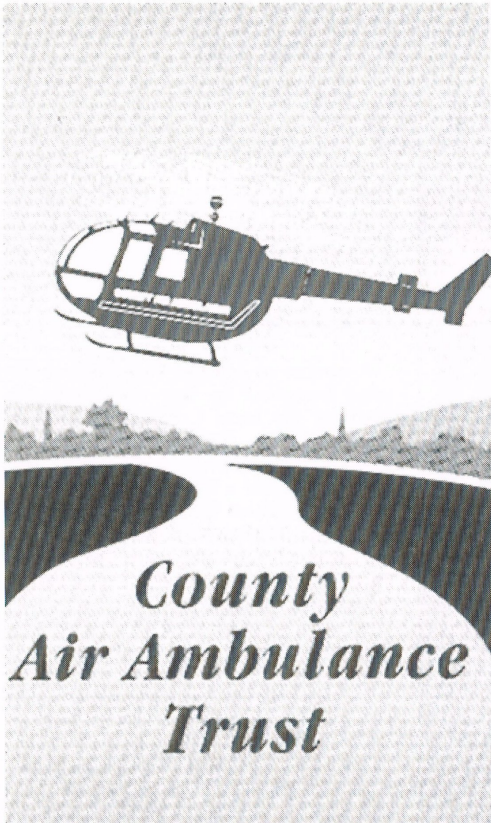
The end of 1995 saw Liz promoted again to Chief Scientist with overall responsibility for the whole Water Quality Department.

Liz's hard won directorship came in July this year when she was appointed the first lady Director of South Staffs Water. She is now responsible to David Penna for all scientific input and water quality aspects the Company is involved with.

Currently, Liz heads up a Department of around forty people and is busily engaged, not only on Company business, but in representing various Water Industry Groups and the Company's interests in environmental matters at the local CBI.

Ed: "Congratulations Liz and every good wish from us all for continued success.

STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY AIR AMBULANCE TRUST



As Staff may already know, the Air Ambulance is a vital part of the emergency services in the Midlands. It saves at least two lives each month which would otherwise be lost and reduces the effects of injury and the onset of serious illness for many hundreds of others.

The Service receives no support from the NHS or other public funds and is entirely dependent on the generous financial support of the public, sponsorship and other voluntary contributions. The South Staffordshire Water Holdings Group provides office and administration services.

More help is now needed to build on the success of the last six years. One of the best ways in which Staff can support the Air ambulance is with a regular donation direct from pay. The donation is made before tax is deducted so no tax is paid on the donation.

Ed: Staff who would like to contribute to the Air Ambulance should contact Payroll Department.

SOME FASTFIX FACTS

1. Fastfix has over 250 operatives Nationwide from Inverness to Exeter comprising skilled Plumbers and CORGI Registered Gas Engineers.
2. Currently four Area Managers based in Yorkshire, Leicestershire, Kent and Birmingham are employed, with plans to double this number in 1998.
3. Fastfix offers a GUARANTEED 24 hour service
4. We advertise in no less than 58 yellow pages area directories.
5. Over 60,000 repairs were completed last year.
6. Our turnover is currently in excess of £300,00 per month and rising!
7. Over 175,000 telephone calls were received by us last year. And it doesn't end there! Our relationship with major clients such as GESA, Powergen and Anglian Water go from strength to strength and we are currently discussing Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) amongst other things.

Further issues will centre around the de-regulation of the domestic gas supply market and the re-shaping of the Water Industry as far as the consumer supply obligations are concerned for both utilities.

There's going to be some exciting times and far reaching changes ahead!

Bankie Williams
Director - Fastfix

SOUTH STAFFS INTRODUCES FREE PIPE REPAIR SCHEME

South Staffordshire Water recently announced the introduction of a free repair service for leaks on supply pipes owned by domestic Customers. This means that if any home owner has a leak in the pipe which connects the house or flat to the Company's mains, it will be repaired by the Company free of charge. This applies irrespective of whether the owner or the Company finds the leak. Previously, the home owner was entirely responsible for repairing such leaks.

The free repair service applies only to the supply pipe - it does not cover internal plumbing or drains. It applies only to repairs carried out by the Company. The service is available for the first leak only; Customers with supply pipes in poor condition must replace them at

their own expense. For obvious reasons, the service cannot apply to leaks in pipes beneath buildings though in such cases the Company will install an alternative pipe at a discount.

Director of Corporate Affairs, Mike Swallow, said "although leakage levels in South Staffordshire Water's area are below the national average and we have no shortage of water resources, we are nonetheless wholly committed to getting leakage levels down as far as possible. We hope that the free repair service for householders will provide a significant boost for our efforts."

Earlier this year the Company set up a free leak detection service for all Customers, whether domestic or commercial.

Ed: 'Well done to the overnight teams - out between 10.00 p.m. and 6.00 a.m. - busy checking Company apparatus and at the same time detecting leaks at Customer's properties.

So we're tightening up the system above and beyond the boundary line!

I must point out that this is a "first" the M.D. has missed! Perhaps it was too much of a shock that the great tradition of "just who does the service pipe belong to?" has finally been broken!

Well now it's ours - for the first repair at any rate!

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT BLITHFIELD?



Children and Teacher busy at Blithfield

This time last year, Waterwhat 6 reported on the opening of Blithfield Education Centre by Bill Oddie.

This inaugural event brought together a number of Education Authorities and gave our Company the opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to education and environmental conservation.

Now, twelve months later, we report on a number of new initiatives which serve as a reminder of South Staffs determination to provide a first class educational facility for schools and other interested groups.

Making Sense of Science

On 31st October 1996, Blithfield Education Centre played host to the Walsall area launch of a new Teacher Training resource called "Making Sense of Science."

This video based package is designed to be used during INSET activities and aims to help primary teachers gain a greater understanding of the fundamental scientific principles which they have to teach to their students. It also serves to offer advice on how these principles may be taught in order to maximise the students understanding of them.

The launch event was yet another successful partnership activity involving the Company, Walsall Education Business Partnership and Walsall Local Authority. As a result of its success, it is now planned to run a second event.

Sponsors:

Glaxo Wellcome
Department of Trade & Industry
Institute of Electrical Engineers
Channel 4 Schools

Software Produced By:

Software Production Enterprises Ltd.,
57, South Lambeth Road,
London. SW8 1RH

Community Activities

A number of activities have been undertaken throughout the year which serve the needs of the Local Communities such as Church Groups, Natural History Groups, Cubs and Playgroups. In addition, an Open Day for Staff and a New Years Eve Walk for the local residents have been undertaken. All of these activities have generated interest and support for the centre and have helped the Company make a positive contribution to its community programme.

Teacher Training

The past year has seen the development of other partnership activities. Teacher Training Days have been developed and run; the aim being to provide teachers with relevant information on the Water Industry in return for their expertise and time in writing educational resource materials for use both at the Centre and in School. These activities have been supported by a range of organisations including Walsall EBP, the Teacher Placement Service and the Staffordshire Partnership. It is hoped that information packs will soon be available.

General Information

Feedback from visiting Schools and Groups over the past year has been excellent, with some already making repeat bookings. The Centre is rapidly developing into an invaluable resource enabling young people to significantly enhance their curriculum studies in many subject areas.

Ed. For further information, please contact Steven Blower at Head Office.



The importance of correct feeding of the Wildlife is part of the children's day at Blithfield

NEW INITIATIVES AT HSS

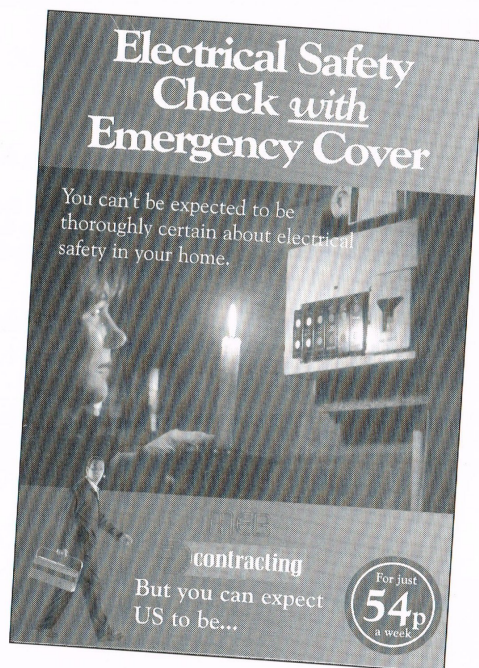
The Home Service Scheme continues to go from strength to strength.

By mid October this year the Home Service members totalled over 276,000 from the South Staffs Water, Three Valleys Water and Anglian Water areas.

HSS have recently introduced an Electrical Home Service "Peace of Mind Package" in conjunction with the Midlands Electricity Board. MEB Contracting will now provide a scheme that combines an initial safety inspection and 24 hour call-out emergency service with £300 of cover per claim.

"Peace Of Mind Package"

- Initial Safety Inspection:
- Domestic electrical wiring inspection.
- Electrical earthing and bonding check.
- Microwave radiation leakage detection test.
- Portable electrical appliance testing of up to 10 specified appliances.



Emergency Cover:

- 24 Hour, 365 day emergency call out.
- Work undertaken by MEB Contractings Team of over 300 Electricians.
- Fully guaranteed work.
- All electrical wiring repairs covered up to a maximum of £300 for call-out, labour and parts per claim.
- No claim forms to complete or bills to pay (within limits of cover).
- No excess to pay on any claim.
- The repair of domestic appliances is **NOT** covered.

All this for just 54p. per week!

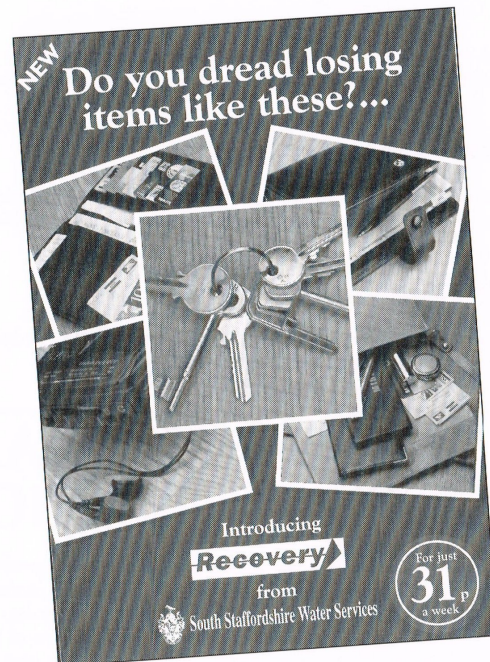
The service is to be expanded to cover Eastern Electricity, Southern Electric and Northern Electric areas and by the end of this year over 15,000 Members are expected to have signed up.

"Recovery"

Another new scheme is entitled "Recovery." For just 31p. a week, Scheme Members can cover their car and household keys plus eight other personal possessions such as diaries, address books, cheque books, credit cards, cameras, etc. In addition, a Locksmith Service is included to gain access to a car or house or change locks, etc.

So if you lose your personal possessions - "Recovery" gives the finder a £10 reward to report their find for EACH item - up to a total value of

£100 - and you'd be surprised just how many items are lost rather than stolen. You just attach a supplied tag to your possessions and forget it.



High Likelihood We'll Get Them Back:

With the recovery tags, all the finder has to do is call the BT local rate telephone number to report the find and to claim the £10 reward. We will ask for the unique identification number and make arrangements to reunite the keys or personal possessions with you.

We'll Get You Home:

You've lost your wallet and keys and you're stranded away from home. Don't worry, we will make arrangements to get you home and cover the cost up to £150 or, if you're on a journey elsewhere - we will make sure you arrive or provide hotel accommodation.

Our Locksmith Will Get You In Quickly:

If you have had your keys stolen and there's a security risk or you cannot get into your home, don't worry. We will despatch one of our National Network of Approved Locksmiths - who will be with you in a maximum of 2 hours to get you in and change the locks if necessary.

Lost Items - We Will Replace Them:

So confident are we that the reward will work, if it doesn't we'll give you up to £50 towards the cost of replacing your wallet, purse or handbag - items whose value is usually taken up by the "excess" on Home Insurance Policies.

Benefits of Cover:

- Up to £100 of rewards to finders (£10 per item) as an incentive to return.
- Arranging for the return of your keys/possessions.
- EITHER: Locksmith call-out, labour and replacement locks up to £150 if keys are stolen.
- OR: Up to £150 to continue your journey or get you home, providing taxi, train, overnight accommodation or car hire if you lose your car keys and are stranded.
- Cost of replacement of unrecovered wallet, handbag or purse up to £50
- You can call 24 hours a day - 365 days a year.
- There is no excess to pay on any claim.
- There is no Locksmith bill to pay or claim form to complete within the limit of cover.

Total annual cover of up to £450 for only £16 a year (31p. per week).

POSITIVE ABOUT DISABLED PEOPLE

South Staffordshire Water Holdings Limited have recently been awarded a Certificate in recognition of being a Company who is Positive About Disabled People. In future our advertising material will be able to incorporate the Disability Symbol.

The work involved in our application included the introduction of the Policy - Disabled Persons and also the following five commitments:-

1. A Guaranteed Job Interview:

To interview all applicants with a disability who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy and to consider them on their abilities.

2. Consulting Disabled Employees Regularly:

To ask disabled employees at least once a year what we can do to ensure they can develop and use their abilities at work.

3. Keeping Employees If They Become Disabled:

To make very effort when employees become disabled to ensure they stay in employment.

4. Improving Knowledge:

To take action to ensure that key employees develop the awareness of disability needed to make the commitments work.

5. Checking Progress and Planning Ahead:

Each year, to review these commitments and what has been achieved, plan ways to improve on them and let all employees know about progress and future plans.

Mr. S. McIntyre, West Midlands Regional Director for the Employment Service presented our Certificate to Mike Swallow, Director of Corporate Affairs, in September.
Joyce Piper

THE TERRY McALLISTER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Terry had always been intensely interested in Staff development and training and it was felt there could be no better tribute to his professional life and work than to get the Company to endow a Scholarship in his memory. He had also been a staunch supporter of the Institute of Water Officers (IWO) and had been President of both the Midlands and North Wales & Cheshire areas. IWO was approached to see whether they would wish to be associated with the Scholarship and to administer it. They responded very enthusiastically and the Scholarship was formally launched at the IWO National Conference last April.

The Scholarship will be awarded annually by a panel drawn from the Company, IWO and the academic field. The award will be for a sum of up to £5,000 to assist a person based in the U.K. to undertake a water supply project which will benefit both the individual in their career development and also the Industry. The successful applicant will have to pre-

sent a paper to the IWO Conference in the year succeeding the award.

Applications are open to individuals from all disciplines, though they must possess a qualification demonstrating an ability to carry through the project such as HNC, Degree, Professional Qualification, Membership of a Professional Body such as IWO, etc.

Further details of the Scholarship and an application form can be obtained from Gary Hazlehurst on Extension 5080

Ed. Jill McKean of Severn Trent Water was this years winner for her project "The Development of a Water Treatment Works Incident Simulation Package." The award was presented at IWEX 97 on 5th November 1997.

THE YEAR 2000

Not even the most computer ignorant amongst us can fail to have noticed the widespread concern reported in the Press about the effect of the approaching Millennium on the operation of computers. According to the most extreme reports the world of micro-technology will descend into chaos as computers fail to recognise that we have moved into the year 2000 and either revert to 1900 or else suffer a "nervous breakdown." This would of course have serious repercussions for the Company in areas such as bill calculation, invoice processing, debt recovery, telemetry, statistics, work scheduling and HSS policy renewals, to name but a few.

In reality things are not so bad. Much computer software is already "Year 2000 Compliant." In addition, our Computer Department has already reviewed many of the systems within the Company to ascertain whether problems are likely so that preventative action can be taken. Work on other systems is ongoing. The object is to achieve "Year 2000" compliance by April 1998.

However, to be absolutely confident that disruption will not occur at 2000 we need to be sure that our Computer Department has looked at ALL systems - not just the ones for which they are directly responsible.

Ed: We need a concerted effort within the Company to identify all possible systems. This can only be achieved by all Staff giving careful thought to the elements of the jobs which they do and whether systems might exist to support them. The Computer Department is in the process of contacting all Departments to facilitate this. Therefore, your co-operation is requested.

GREAT SERVICE - LOWEST PRICES!

Earlier this year the Company's Customer Consultative Committee considered a report on Comparison of Water Charges in England and Wales and also OFWAT reports on Levels of Service, Cost of Water Delivered, Disconnections and Compensation. The Committee were extremely pleased to note that from the evidence provided by these reports, the Company is succeeding in its aim of providing the best possible Customer Service at the lowest possible price and is an Industry leader in many areas of activity. The Committee asked that their congratulations should be passed on to all Staff.

Ed: Whilst this is obviously a legitimate case for self-congratulation, we must constantly remember that this position has been achieved only by a great effort from all concerned and that a continuation effort is required to maintain it. Its all too easy to fall prey to complacency - and lose our position within the Industry as a result!

— THAR SHE BLOWS! —

OR "TEAM BUILDING THE UPLS (Underground Pipeline Services) WAY"

THE MISSION

To rebuild the fountain in the middle of JCB's Ornamental Lake at their Rocester Plant.

THE INCIDENTALS

You have five days to complete this task in time for a visit to the plant by wealthy Arab buyers.

There is eight foot of water in the lake and 10,000 carp.

The fountain is 147m out in the middle of the lake.

You cannot empty the lake.

The bed of the lake is uneven with a slope of six to eight feet between the works and the busy A515 on the opposite shore.

You may only use JCB excavators in front of the works - provided free of charge, of course. OH! and KEEP OF THE GRASS!!

THE PROJECT TEAM

Jason Griffiths: alias "SPENT MATCH" (we have seen him in a wetsuit).

Alan Perrin: alias "WARREN" - see Pete Lynes for explanation.

Peter Lynes: (any resemblance to TOM CRUISE is purely coincidental).



Day 1 - Friday

Jason Griffiths receives a call at lunchtime on Friday, 4th April from George Campion of JCB, asking whether we could renew the pump delivery pipe supplying water to their fountain as it was damaged by dredging operations last year "oh ... and you will probably have to renew the fountain itself as it is encased in a concrete plinth so you won't be able to connect your pipe to that end! The only problem is that the supply must be restored and the fountain working by Wednesday of next week in time for a visit from some very influential Arab buyers."

Jason confidently replies that "if anyone can do it - we can. We will ring you back with our plans before 3.00 p.m." Heralding one heck of a busy weekend!

1.00 p.m.

150m Of special black polythene pipe is ordered from Wavins for the pump delivery pipe. Mr. Bamford himself requests this as he does not want to look out of his office window and see a blue line snaking across his lake. We thank the Almighty for Tom Reid who arranges prompt delivery of 12m lengths of pipe to the JCB site.

2.00 p.m.

A brainstorming session in Command H.Q. (the Rest Room at Tipton). Everyone available from UPLS chips in - the plan being to design a stable rig to house the new fountain using as many standard stock items as possible. Everyone has ideas ranging from the sublime to the ridiculous. We eventually opt for a plan referred to at one point as "reaching into the realms of fantasy!"

2.45 p.m.

The Stores requirements are listed and Chris Allsopp pulls the short straw - we send him off to the Stores with requisition forms to plead with Bill the Storeman.

3.00 p.m.

George Campion is delighted when we tell him the good news - and something of our plans. "Well I suppose you know what you are going" he says. "Oh - and I have started lowering the water level in the lake" says George. "There should only be about five foot of water in it by Sunday" Pete Lynes assures everyone. "Trust me - it will work I tell you!"

3.20 p.m. We ring Dooceys with the news that we need some able bodied men for the week-end - preferably all good swimmers!

4.00 p.m. Colin from SSW Pump Services gets a call from Pete Lynes requesting the manufacture of four mild steel straps (for stabilising the rig). "They will be made tonight" says Colin (given an explanation of what they are for). Arrangements are made for Jason to pick them up from the security cabin at Green Lane at 7.30 on Saturday morning.

5.30 p.m. Access to Southern Area Office is arranged for 7.30 the next morning.

Day 2 - Saturday

7.30 a.m. Jason calls at Green Lane and picks up the straps.

8.00 a.m. "Trust me - it will work" says Peter Lynes to Dooceys doubtful crew (signified by much shaking of heads) as the plan is explained and drawings handed out to the assembled men.

9.00 a.m. Construction work on the rig begins.

10.00 a.m. The new fountain for JCB is slowly taking shape. "Wait a minute! Isn't this -well a bit blue?" asks Jason. (The rig is made up from sections of blue polyethylene pipe and blue painted fittings).

10.15 a.m. Pete Lynes tracks down Tom Reid from Wavin and explains the need to disguise the rig. "Hammerite" says Tom. "What you need is Hammerite. It wont affect the pipe and it wont harm the fish once its dry. We've used it before with great success." Pete decides not to bother asking where but hot foots it to a D.I.Y. Store and comes back with three spray cans of black Hammerite. "Trust me - this will work" he says.

11.30 a.m. We explain what the rig is for for the fifteenth time this morning. "No its not a Bouncy Castle - honest! Trust me!" says Pete.

12.00 - 3.00 p.m. The joints are all welded up. This seems to take forever as each joint takes several minutes to

weld and half an hour to cool before we can begin painting.

3.15 p.m. Dooceys Grab lorry arrives to load the rig for transport to JCB the next morning. "Did anyone measure the width of the platform on this lorry before we started constructing the Rig?" asks Dooceys Foreman, John Wyman. "Trust me - it will fit" says Pete. On go the lifting straps and the rig fits neatly on to the back of the lorry with two inches to spare. No - we hadn't measured it!

4.50 p.m. Just before the Watersports Shop closes, Jason manages to purchase two wetsuits. It seems they are available in sizes to fit anyone - no matter what their shape!

Day 3 - Sunday

8.00 a.m. Jason, Dooceys men and the rig arrive at JCB, Rocester. Jason discovers that he has a slight problem to contend with - he is the only one present who can swim! As there is only five foot of water in the lake and he is the only one slim enough to get into the other wetsuit, Colin Taylor, Doocey's driver, bravely volunteers to go into the water if necessary. Something he later regrets when he discovers just how cold it is.

9.00 a.m. Several empty 45 gallon drums are supplied by JCB. These are lashed to the rig to act as floats so that it can be manoeuvred into position.

10.15 a.m. The new pump delivery pipe, welded into a continuous length on Saturday, is attached to the centre of the rig. The outer discharge end of this pipe will eventually be the only thing showing above water level once the lake is "topped up" to its normal level.

11.00 a.m. With Jason and Colin working in the water to stabilise the rig, two men in a boat and three men on the bank feeding out the pipe, the new fountain assembly is inched into place - right next to the old concrete plinth - over 100 m from the bank.

2.00 p.m. After a quick lunch and a "little something to keep the cold out" several bags of concrete are



mixed and floated out to the rig on a small pontoon. The hollow legs of the rig are then filled so that it stays firmly on the bottom.

4.30 p.m.

The legs of the rig are capped with blank flanges (more weight) and the mild steel straps made by SSW Pump Services are bolted into place. It becomes evident that four more of these straps will be needed so that the central fountain outlet will deliver a vertical column of water and to prevent vibration when the pump is turned on.

6.00 p.m.

Measurements are taken and we call it a day. "This had better work" says Jason. "Trust me!" says Pete Lynes.

Day 4 - Monday

8.00 a.m.

Pete Lynes orders the additional ties and SSW Pump Services promises them for lunchtime.

9.00 a.m.

Lengths of ductile iron pipe offcuts and scrap steel pipe are manoeuvred into place along the length of the plastic pump delivery pipe so that it will sink and be anchored to the lake bottom once filled with water.

3.15 a.m.

Jason warns an elderly gentleman not to get too close to the edge of the open sump-hole next to JCBs submersible pump. "And be careful near that cable" warns Jason. The man introduces himself as Joe Bamford. Mr. Bamford informs Jason that the real reason for the rush in completing the work is that the Prime Minister, John Major, is visiting the works on Thursday. "Good stuff this plastic pipe of yours" says Mr. Bamford. "Will you have the fountain working in time?" he asks. "Trust me - it will be working" is Jason's reply. (He's learning from Pete)!!!

4.30 p.m.

The pump delivery pipe is attached to the pump.

9.00 a.m.

The pump is switched on, the pipe fills with water and - much to Jason's relief - it sinks to the bed of the lake without pulling the fountain assembly over with it.

Day 5 - Tuesday

The four remaining stabilising ties are bolted into place. This operation has to be completed from a boat as very little of the rig is now visible above the rising water.

10.30 a.m.

The old fountain head is unbolted from its concrete plinth (This is the bit that produces a spray at the outlet). This is then bolted on to the outlet pipe in the centre of the new fountain assembly.

11.30 a.m.

In the Office at Tipton, Peter Lynes receives a call from Jason. "Alan Perrin is just about to turn the pump on full" says Jason. A few seconds of silence are followed by whoops of delight. "Its working - its actually ***** working!" shouts an excited Jason.

12.00 Noon

Alan Perrin turns off the pump. "Its good to see that working again" says George Campion. "But why turn it off?" "Well" replies Alan Perrin "I don't know who cut the old bolts off your pump but they cut straight through the flange in a couple of places."

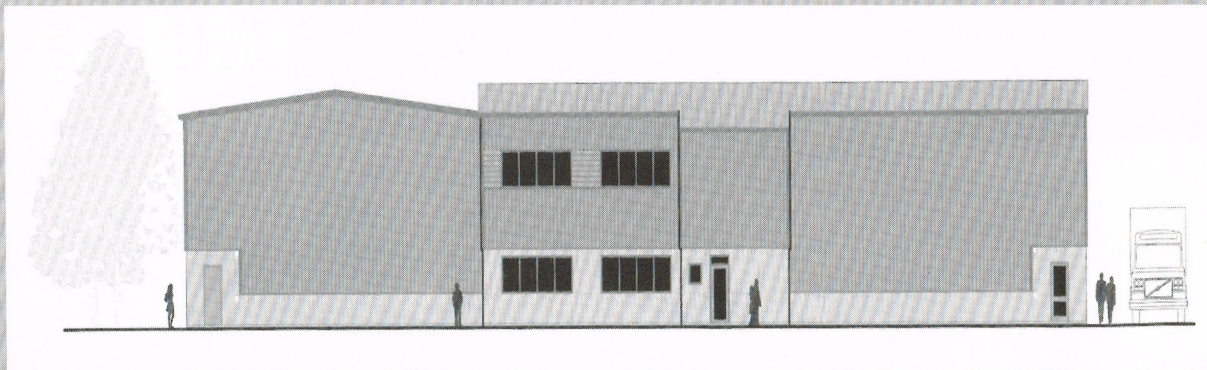
Exit some red faced JCB employees!

Day 7 - Thursday

So, if you saw Thursday nights Local News you will have seen Mr. Major visiting the JCB Works. George Campion was very impressed - so impressed that we have been awarded further work at the Rochester Plant worth around £20,000. The good news is that we have THREE WEEKS to complete it - what a luxury!

Peter Lynes and Jason Griffiths UPLS (Underground Pipeline Services)

NEW PURPOSE BUILT OFFICES FOR THE NORTHERN AREA



Sandfields Depot and Offices in Lichfield and the Sub-Office and Depot at Burton-On-Trent will be relocated at Fradley Park on the A38 trunk road between the two Towns to improve Customer Services for the Northern Area.

The move will benefit our Customers and improve working conditions for the Staff.

The two sites have played an essential role in providing an excellent service for Customers in the past. Now it is felt that the time is right to improve both the services and working conditions so that as a modern Company, we continue to improve on our success to date.

The new Offices and Depot are another "first" for the Company but the closure of Sandfields and Burton herald the end of an era. For example, did you know that our first ever Offices were in Lichfield? Also we've had a presence in Burton since 1881 when the Depot in York street was built by local Builders, Thomas Lowe & Sons, for a cost of £595.

But back to the present! The move to Fradley should take place towards the end of January 1998. Here's hoping it all goes smoothly and everyone settles in and enjoys their new surroundings. I'd welcome early comments from Northern Division Staff regarding the move and how you coped, etc. for the next edition of WaterWhat!

Ed.

— "MAIN LAYING MANIA" —

OR THE UTTOXETER TRUNK MAIN

Earlier this year, the Uttoxeter area was supplied with clean water from Crumpwood and Hulme Springs until the latter became contaminated.

Obviously maintenance of the supply was crucial but the problem was - should we treat Hulme Springs or supply the area from another source?

The latter course of action was decided upon for supply security reasons and so we were faced with laying a 16 Km. main into the area from Brindley Bank - FAST!

First we asked the landowners to forego their normal three months notification period. With one exception, all agreed, which speeded up the process considerably. In the meantime we had to work out how best to cross the River Trent twice the Trent & Mersey Canal (twice), negotiate two rail crossings and six minor roads and one major highway!

Pipe deliveries started in mid March. Three weeks later we com-

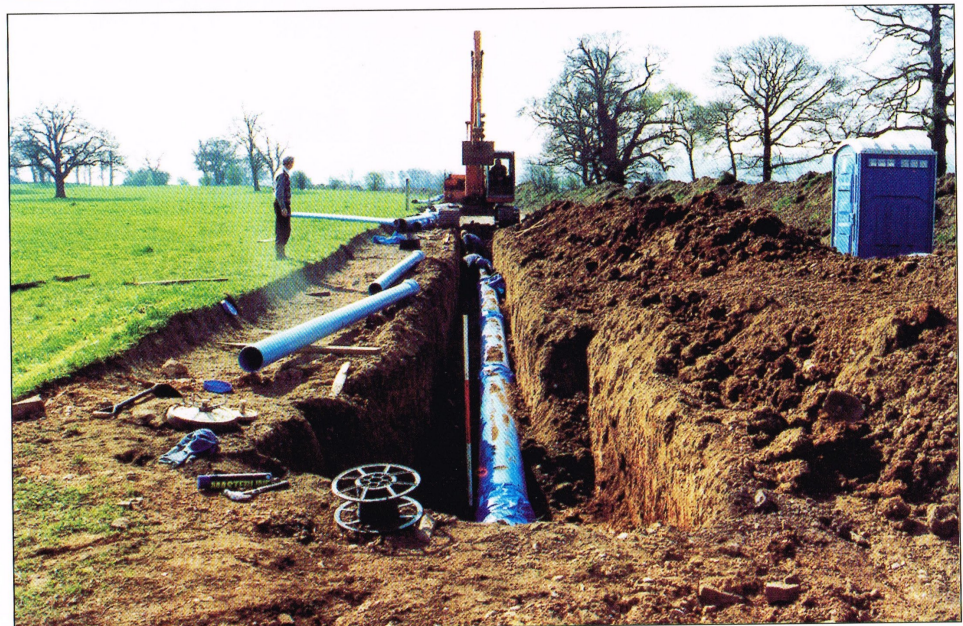
menced main laying - employing six gangs at the height of the frenetic action and laying around 1.6 Km. a week (or just over a mile).

Connection points for future load main connections were also installed as well as a Chlorine Plant for the main which had to be built at Brindley Bank.

The Uttoxeter trunk main is the first major reinforcement of the supply to the area since the Company took over in 1968. It took ten weeks to complete (a Company record) and cost £2.3 million. Pressures and flows to the area can now be monitored from Green Lane on a twenty-four hour basis.

Chris Wilkes

Ed: 'Well done everybody - a splendid job! But did you know that one of the biggest obstacles to the main laying progress proved to be at Blithfield Reservoir - our own site - where we had to wait until the Widgeon had finished nesting! Blithfield Reservoir is a Special Site of Scientific Interest - don't you know!'



GUNFIGHT AT THE KINGSTONE CORRAL

Notices of our intention to lay a pipeline from Brindley Bank to Uttoxeter had gone out on 14th February this year. By law we should give landowners twelve weeks notice of our intentions - after which we have a legal right to entry.

However, as the main laying was vitally important and we only had three weeks notice ourselves, we asked the landowners (all 42 of them) to forego their notification period. All agreed except one - Mr. Peter Till.

For the next couple of months we tried our hardest to negotiate with Mr. Till but he refused to budge and although we would have a right to enter his land, we were afraid that any preventative measures he may take could harm the main laying gangs.

We had paid compensation to all the landowners for disruption whilst the main laying took place but we felt that Mr. Till was refusing us access to obtain more than his fair share. If we gave in, we should be obliged to pay a similar increase to all of the landowners. This was out of the question. Stalemate ensued and then Mr. Till approached the National Farmers Union (NFU) a week before we could legally enter his land.

Patrick Waldron and myself visited the NFU to outline our case. After listening carefully, they approached Peter Till and an agreeable compromise was reached. Problem was - could we believe Peter Till's word? We doubted his sincerity. Our misgivings were borne out when shortly after our meeting with the NFU, Mr. Till approached both the Newspapers and the local TV Station. He complained of South Staffs Water's "Big Brother" approach - riding roughshod over a poor small farmer and offering him a pittance in compensation for what would amount to major disruption to his livelihood.

The situation was deteriorating hourly due to Mr. Till's intransigence and Patrick Waldron decided we would have to resort to the Company's Solicitors.

Meanwhile, pipe-laying gangs and machines were converging on Kingstone - Mr. Till's land. An ugly situation could easily have developed especially when Mr. Till threatened several of the outside Contractors.

At Patrick's meeting with the Solicitors, we were advised to obtain a Court Order, which if successful, could be served by a firm of Bailiffs. The date for our court appearance was provisionally set for a couple of days hence on Friday, 23rd May.

By now Central Television had had its interest aroused and we were informed they would be visiting Mr. Till's property the following day, Thursday, 22nd May. "Mike Swallow's agreed to act as spokesman for the Company" said a relieved Patrick Waldron, "and Tim Fletcher is going to have one last attempt at persuading Peter Till to see sense."

The outcome was rather an anti-climax. Peter Till invited Central TV

and myself into his farmhouse and over coffee an agreement was reached. We got our permission to lay the main. Or did we? Somehow, I still did not trust the man!

That evening Peter Till appeared on Central TV echoing his previous moans about "Big Brother" etc.

Came Friday and Patrick Waldron and myself attended Court. What a shambles! The Usher had lost the papers. They weren't sure whether we were attending a public or a private hearing. People just milled around nonplussed. Solicitors, Bailiffs, Newspapermen, Court Staff, South Staffs personnel - all seemed confused. Helen Bradin, our Solicitor, added to the consternation when she enquired whether Patrick was adequately insured as Peter Till had been known to "defend his property with a shotgun!"

Not to be outdone, the Bailiffs chipped in with lurid tales of "sieges and so forth" they had been involved in.

"Don't worry though" we were generally informed. "Uttoxeter Police have several people available if things turn ugly!" Job's comforters the lot of em!

Finally the hearing started - or so we thought. The lady Magistrate knew Peter Till personally so she had to withdraw. Magistrate number two also knew him but she stayed to assist Magistrate number three. Just as well as he didn't seem to know what on earth was going on!

Helen, our Solicitor, "briefed the beak" who then turned to Peter Till's Solicitor for his version of the saga. "Oh, I've had no instructions" says he "I was just here for another case!"

With that the Court Order in our favour was signed by the "Powers That Be" and we left Court accompanied by the Bailiffs to serve same on Peter Till. Arriving at Kingstone, he was nowhere to be seen. He had, however, left his large ferocious looking dog around who, on our approach, came charging up to us. At which point, one of the Bailiffs bravely leapt from the car and shouted words to the effect "go away!" (Well this is a family publication isn't it?) Amazingly the ferocious beast did just that - honestly - it slunk off - tail between its legs.

The rest was plain sailing. We hammered the Court Order on the farmhouse door and signalled the troops in to finish off the pipeline.

Tim Fletcher

Ed: 'Phew what a saga! I suppose "danger money for the lads" will be the next cry. Anyway, well done everyone. What commendable restraint!



BILLA BARRA TREE PLANTING

If you're like me, "tree planing at Billa Barra" sounded a great idea. As I was convinced it was somewhere in the Australian outback - I volunteered like a shot!

Alas it was too late when I found out the truth! Billa Barra is near Coalville in Leicestershire. In fact the site was part of the New National Forest which takes in Charnwood and Sherwood Forests and extends into Staffordshire around the Burton-Upon-Trent area. Hence the Company's involvement because of our interests in the Burton area. Anyway, 1st March, St. Davids Day, loomed and Patrick Waldron and I set off to be met at the venue by Mike Swallow. Shortly after Angi Robson and Norma Grant arrived, leaving Rob Sawle, Wayne Powell and Mike Watkins to complete the Team.

Some three-quarters of an hour later, the intrepid three showed up! "Got lost!" they said, whilst casting aspersions about each others map reading prowess - or lack of it!

"The Team" now complete we arrived at our allotted site to be told by the organisers that instead of planting one tree each - we had one hundred to plant between us! Before we had time to protest, they (the officials) assured us that the task would not take long and proceeded to give us a demonstration.

Now our new found skills were put to the test and in no time at all - all one hundred saplings were happily rooted in their respective spots. After a windswept photocall, we retired to celebrate our success at the local pub. A variety of lunches and drinks were ordered and some inter-

esting topics of conversation ensued (none of which can be repeated though!)

In ten years or so I shall revisit Billa Barra to see how our mini-forest is fairing. At least I will be able to check if our tree planting skills were as good as the organisers made out!

But if anyone fancies going to have a look for themselves - don't ask Mike, Wayne or Rob for directions!!

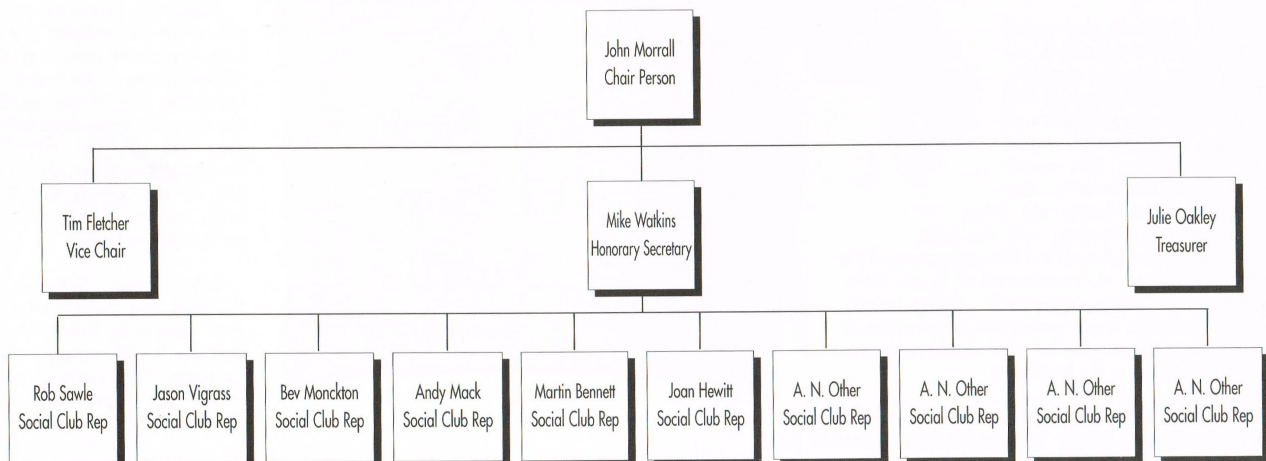
Barbara Roberts



The "Volunteers" in action at Billa Barra
There must be gold in them thar hills!

THE SOCIAL CLUB COMMITTEE THE WHO'S AND THE WHY'S

Who's On The Committee? Could it be you....?



Why Does The Committee Exist?

The Social Club Committee exists to manage and spend the Social Club funds by organising events for you the employees. Without your support the Social Club cannot survive.

Who Can Be Nominated To Go On The Committee?

Everyone is automatically a Member of the Social Club when they join any Company within the Group. Any employee, regardless of position, can be nominated for the Committee. If you are male, female, young or slightly more mature and are willing to actively participate, then the Committee needs your contribution. The wider the range of interests on the Committee, the better. This way, ideas come from all Departments, age groups and gender.

Why Should I Be On The Committee?

Why Not?

We meet monthly for approximately one hour plus the time you spend organising or supporting events. You might even enjoy it and if you don't - you're not bound to stay on the Committee - you can give notice and resign. So you've got nothing to lose and loads to gain.

Who Do I See About Being Nominated?

Either myself as Hon. Secretary or John Morrall as Chair Person would be happy to explain the details or answer any questions you might have.

Mike Watkins

A NEW LEASE OF LIFE

In the last edition of "WaterWhat", Southern Area Manager, Alan Rogers, wrote about the reorganisation and refurbishment of the Tipton Depot. I had reason to call there last Autumn and noted that the old office had been gutted to facilitate the necessary improvements.

I mentioned to Alan that there had been talk of rebuilding the old place for many years and in fact Ted Jones, the Area Engineer at the time, told me about the proposals twenty-five years ago. His successor, Roger Morgan who sadly passed away in 1996, had a blueprint of the proposed building and once even had the footings pegged out.

In more recent years there has been much speculation that the Depot was to be closed down and administered from Green Lane. This would have been a crying shame because South Staffs Water has had an involvement in the area since 1853

Tipton Town itself can be traced back to Saxon times when it was known as "Tibbington." This name is said to derive from the tribe of the "Tibbs" or "Tibbings" and the spelling of the name has changed many times over the years. In the year of 1151 during the reign of King Stephen, it was known as "Tibitone" and throughout the ensuing centuries some of the changes were "Siybington", "Typton", "Tybynton" and "Tebbington" until the reign of George 1st in 1723 when it became "Tibberton."

"Tibbington" was made up of fields, meadows and forests and the people lived from the land. It was later found to be very rich in coal and throughout the industrial revolution, thriving industries were developed and "Tipton" as it was now known became prosperous. Great works such as Palethorpes, Lee Howl, Beans, Horseley Bridge, Conegre and George Lathes became household names. Later many other firms were set up such as the Vono, Revo, Denbigh, Triplex, British Rolling Mills to name a few.

Tipton became an Urban District council in 1834 and attained full Borough status in 1938.

I can remember the first Mayor of the new Borough was Alderman Welsh who ran a business locally in Great Bridge.

The last Mayor in 1965/66 was "man of the people" Jonah Whitehouse MBE. Jonah was a very highly principled man and always maintained that Councillors should not receive payment for their services. He practised what he preached and always travelled by public transport even when he was entitled to request a car. At the end of his term of office, Tipton was "swallowed up" by neighbouring West Bromwich and lost its identity.

Worse was to come when the area was integrated into Sandwell. This was a disgraceful act by the Government of the day because the people of the Town were allowed no say in the matter and Jonah in company with the majority of "Tiptonians" rued the day when they lost their independence.

For whatever reasons, one by one, the great Companies mentioned above closed down with the exception of "The Bean" which just about hung on by its finger tips and, of course, Palethorpes, who moved to Shropshire.

South Staffs Water must be one of the oldest firms still operating in the Town and it is pleasing that it decided to base the Southern Area Administration there and not move as others have done. It is also noteworthy that although the office has been completely re-designed internally to meet modern day requirements, externally it retains much of the original frontage with the stone over the front entrance proudly displaying the year it was built.

If the old place could talk there would be more than a few interesting tales to tell - probably enough to fill the pages of our Newsletter for many years to come.

Den Jones

Ed: *Thanks Den - a great article. Do you get the idea folks?*

DID YOU KNOW?

South Staffs Water supplies 362 million litres of water per day to 1.2 million Customers over an area of 580 sq. miles and employs 650 people.

South Staffs Water has been in the private sector since 1853 - it was not privatised in 1989.

The Company has imposed no hosepipe or sprinkler bans for over 20 years

Currently water resources are in an extremely healthy state. At an average household annual bill for 1997/98 of £78 - our prices are again the second lowest in the Country.

We are the only Water Company to have consistently set prices below the legal limit.

Since 1991 we have effectively left £8m. in Customers pockets - equivalent on average to £16 per property.

Ed: *As a result of even more demanding criteria set by OFWAT we were awarded two stars for the Company's level of service performance during 1996/97.*

This is despite our improved performance and I am reliably informed by the Customer Services Director that we are on target to achieve a four star rating for 1997/98.

1970s PARTY GOERS RAISE CASH FOR BIRMINGHAM CHILDRENS HOSPITAL

A 1970s Charity Party to raise funds for the Birmingham Childrens' Hospital proved a smash hit, with donations flooding in from across the West Midlands region - raising over £2,000

The twenty year old music revival held recently at "The Square Pub & Restaurant", St. Pauls Square, Birmingham, was attended by over two hundred supporters - donating £5.00 each towards the Hospital.

John Taylor, one of the organisers of the event, explained:- "We developed the idea from the initial plan of a reunion of old friends and decided that whilst we were enjoying ourselves, others should benefit from the evening. The Childrens' Hospital was a natural choice, especially as it admits children from across the region.

"Everyone gave their services free of charge to such a worthy cause and our thanks go out to all those supporting the event. In particular we would like to thank Mr. Harris, Chairman of South Staffordshire Water, who heard what we were arranging and agreed to match the funds raised on Saturday night. This means that we were able to hand over a cheque to Malcolm Faulkener from the Childrens' Hospital for £2,020 - knowing that sick children will benefit."

Ed: We got to hear of this event via another of the organisers, Derrick Davis who works for SSW Pump Workshops. A worthy cause indeed! Well done Derrick and all concerned

THE RETIRED EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

During conversations with Members of the Company's Staff, I am asked what is the REA and what is our purpose?

Its aim and objective is to provide an organisation which offers welfare facilities to Members wanting help or advice, to foster goodwill and friendship and to keep Members informed of matters of interest from within the Company. A hard core of Members meet every month at the Bloxwich Leisure Centre for a social gathering which usually includes a talk by a guest speaker. These talks are always interesting, entertaining and quite often very amusing.

A Management Committee is elected every year at our Annual General Meeting and we meet once a month to manage and monitor the Association's activities.

For many years the Company has organised and financed outings for its pensioners. Over the past few years the Committee has undertaken this task.

A number of outings are arranged and this year our Members were offered a choice of any one of four outings. These included visits to Granada Studios, The Royal Show at Stoneleigh, Llangollen Eisteddfod

and Portmadoc via the Ffestiniog Narrow Gauge Railway. Just short of three hundred Members opted for the Portmadoc trip and it took three coaches to get everyone to Ffestiniog where we hired a complete train to continue our journey to Portmadoc.

At the end of each outing, Members enjoy a dinner at a suitable restaurant on route. The outings are usually well attended and enjoyed by all.

Another highlight of our activities is a cross channel shopping trip via Le Shuttle. About ninety Members attended this year - although this trip is self financed.

Throughout the year, Committee Members are available to visit any Member who is sick, either at home or in hospital. These activities obviously involve a fair amount of work but without the continued support of the Company Chairman and Board of Directors they couldn't take place.

Membership of the Association is automatic upon retirement from the Company.

Den Jones
(Retired Member)

AMP3 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN NO. 3

Every five years, South Staffs Water along with the other Water Companies, has to submit a detailed business plan to OFWAT.

The plan is a prodigious document which is sectionalised with each section containing charts, graphs and explanatory notes as to how the conclusions were arrived at. We have to satisfy OFWAT on a large number of points including:-

- The condition of the Company assets.
- The suitability of these assets.
- Our assessment of water quality parameters
- Water demand including future forecasting.
- Our current charges to consumers.
- Budget plans for cash spends over the next fifteen years.

Our next submission, the third, or AMP3 as its referred to, is in April 1999. Just under eighteen months away!

However, in addition to this we have to submit annually what is known

as a "July Return" - giving details of our performance over the past twelve months.

OFWAT, who currently employ just under two hundred people, closely monitor all of the twenty-eight Water Companies - both on their performance over the previous twelve months and their Asset Management Plans. After each five yearly submission, eight months later we get OFWATs final determination which recommends any additional course of action we should undertake and, most importantly, how much we can charge our consumers for their water.

Ed: Now you know why Steve MacKellar and his Economic Regulation Team go around with deepening frowns as their deadline approaches and why eight months later after OFWATs final determination - they all break out in huge smiles!

Good luck with AMP3 lads!! May OFWAT yet again bestow upon us their gold stars!

CLOSURE OF THE SANDFIELDS PUMPING STATION



Work commencing on the treatment works at Sandfields in 1923

The 4th September 1997 was a red-letter day for the city of Lichfield. On that Thursday, the first steps were taken to safeguard Minster and Stowe Pools - beloved amenity areas in the City.

Falling water levels had raised worrying doubts about the future of the pools but the action in September should reverse the water losses and allow the process of natural recovery to begin.

The problem arose because not enough water was flowing through the Leomansley Brook, the one and only feed to the Stowe and Minster pools - whilst groundwater was being abstracted from the catchment area. In fact, it was identified by the Environment Agency as one of the forty catchments in the Country most deserving of priority attention.

Enter South Staffordshire Water who offered to reduce the amount of water it is allowed to abstract from the Lichfield area. The target reduction was around 20 percent or 6 million litres a day, which should allow levels and flows in the Leomansley Brook to rise again.

It was agreed that the best solution would be to stop pumping water from the Hanch Tunnel and to reduce abstraction by the two Pumping Stations near the City - at Pipe Hill and Trent Valley.

By far the biggest contribution to the reduction comes from the closure of the Sandfields Pumping Station. This was served by Hanch Tunnel - the Company's first and most original source of water. Running some five to six kilometres from under the City to the North, the tunnel is constructed to absorb water from the surrounding ground - as innovative an idea today as when the tunnel was built in the 1850s.

By closing the facility - the step taken on 4th September - the Company has reduced abstraction by 4.5 million litres a day or three-quarters of the overall total from Lichfield. The balance will be made up by the lower abstractions from the Pipe Hill and Trent Valley Pumping Stations.

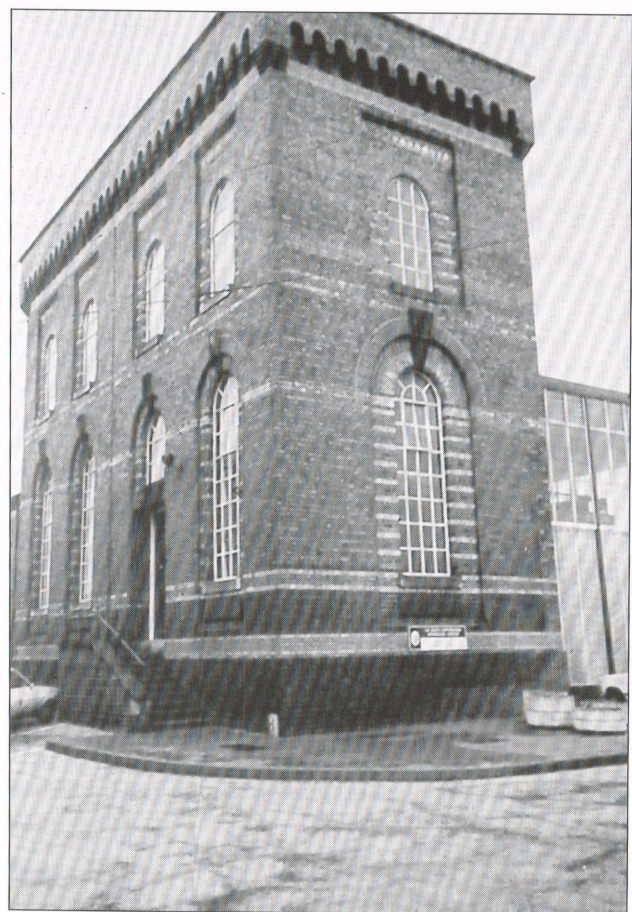
In recent times, millions have been spent on increasing the amount of water flowing into Blithfield Reservoir from the River Blythe and on upgrading and raising the treatment capacity of the Seedy Mill Works. Measures such as these mean that nowadays, Lichfield, for example, could be supplied from the Hampton Loade Works on the River Severn in Shropshire, if need be.

This interlocked system is the culmination of work that began in Lichfield

over 140 years ago. Now centrally controlled from the Company's Green Lane Headquarters in Walsall, the network unites facilities such as Blithfield Reservoir, Seedy Mill, Hampton Loade, Chelmarsh Reservoir and twenty-eight groundwater Stations with a major trunk main running through the area West to East.

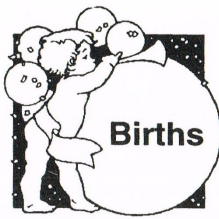
Without this ability to transfer water to meet demand, the prospects for the Lichfield pools would have been dismal indeed.

Ed: Whilst it's sad to report the closure of a Station that first opened in 1858 just five years after the Company was first formed, we can all take heart from the fact that an environmental amenity has been preserved in Lichfield without any impairment to the product quality or quantity we all pride ourselves in supplying to our consumers.



All that remains of the original Pumping Station - the engine house at Sandfields

ANNOUNCEMENTS ❖ ANNOUNCEMENTS ❖ ANNOUNCEMENTS ❖



Congratulations To the Following Proud "Moms" & "Dads"

Sheryl Lewis became our first new mom of the year when she gave birth to Kyle on 27th February. He came into the world at 7lb 9oz.

Next came Annette Foster on 7th April when baby Zoe Elizabeth tipped the scales at 8lb 7oz.

The weight contest was all over bar the shouting on the 2nd May when Becci Braithwaite gave birth to Levi Blue weighing 9lb 5oz at the most unsociable time of 1.09 a.m. Perhaps this is a taste of things to come - eh Mom?

Simone and Dean Carless are now the very proud parents of a lovely daughter Laura who was born on 9th May - weighing 8lb 5 1/2oz.

A more reasonable time was chosen by James Peter, son of Paula and Paul Rushbrook who arrived at 5.17 p.m. on 4th June. James weighed in at 6lb 15oz.

On 30th July came Sharon O'Connell's son Jon Hayden. Little Jon weighed 6lb 3 1/2oz.

Sue Rogers became the proud mom of Elliot David on 10th September. We do not know just how much Elliot weighed but for sure he'll have lots of cuddles.

Samantha Battison made sure the lads stayed in front and proudly produced her son Nathan Pritchard.

This latest instalment of the South Staffs Baby Boom was completed when Dawn and Adrian Leadbeater became the proud parents of a baby boy, Samuel James who was born on 1st November. Samuel was born at 4.17 a.m. and weighed 6lb. 4oz. Could be that Samuel and Levi will be little "night howlers!"

The boys were soundly beaten 6 - 2 last year by the lovely lasses. Determined not to be outdone this year the lads turned the tables and scored a resounding 7 - 2 victory.

The present information we have indicates that a total of fifteen ladies within the Company are expecting a baby within the next few months. **Must be something in the water!**



ALTHORPE HOUSE

We were all devastated by the untimely death of Diana, Princess of Wales, but this is especially poignant to me because on 16th August this year we paid a visit to Althorpe House, her family home.

I cannot claim any links with royalty and was merely a tourist on a coach trip arranged by the Social Club. Having previously notified the Estate, we arrived at 1.15 p.m. but found we would not be allowed in until 2.00 p.m. (another cock up John)! We had to wait by the gates which have featured so prominently lately and munched the remains of our sandwiches on the grass which just two weeks later was to be covered in flowers.

In order to obtain funds for the maintenance of the building, the Spencers have to open it to the public for a few days each Summer.

The house even then seemed to exude an air of sadness. With Charles Spencer now living in South Africa, the house was being used as a Conference Centre for rich Americans. Tourists were only let in under sufferance in order to obtain the grant. We were told that Charles Spencer's estranged wife Victoria thought the place to be cold and gloomy and had no wish to live there. Diana's father had divorced his first wife Frances and married Raine who tried to revamp the place somewhat. There were photographs of happier times such as the christening of Charles's daughters Kitty, Eliza and Amelia, but we understood that they had not visited for

some time. There seemed to be relatively few photographs and mementoes of Diana, especially considering her fame. Most references included the H.R.H.

The house is not particularly grand compared with, say Chatsworth, but it has some nice rooms such as the State Dining room and Picture Gallery. The Spencers have lived there since 1508 and as they married into the Marlborough family they had considerable wealth and an impressive collection of paintings. Some rooms are quite homely such as the Marlborough Room (Lounge) and I could imagine living there.

The gardens were relatively plain but contained an interesting informal area at the side of the house which would most likely have been a fun play area for children. This led down to the lake where Diana is now buried. Unfortunately I did not walk down but I wish I had now.

Diana - Rest In Peace.

Robin Comley

Ed: *I am sure that many of us will remember 1997 and link it with the tragic deaths of Diana and Sister Theresa. Two people from very different backgrounds who were linked in friendship and were extreme examples of women who helped others less fortunate than themselves.*

THE D.H. 110

The de-Havilland 110 or the "Sea Vixen" as the Navy called her was the first all weather jet fighter to land on an aircraft carrier. From an early age I've always been fascinated by the twin boom style of the tail and the swept back wing of the 110 and recently decided to build a scale radio controlled model.

The prototype flew on the 26th September 1951 after being constructed at Hatfield and finally, after several design changes, flew supersonic on the 9th April 1952. Disastrously, after an unmarred trials programme, at the very display which was supposed to emphasise the steady progress that was being made, WG236 suddenly broke up over Farnborough while flying fast and low towards the public. Sadly the test pilot, John Derry, and observer, Tony Richards, were killed and an engine which broke loose continued forwards into the crowd - killing twenty-nine people.

The DH110 was on active service in the Suez crises and was used to help break up the doomed tanker, Torry Canyon, off the South Coast of England to prevent further oil contamination in the late 50s early 60s.

Sadly, its last duties were as a radio controlled drone flying from Llanbeder in Wales. It can now be seen on concrete pylons outside a Supermarket on a former Aerodrome at Christchurch and at Yeovilton Fleet Air Arm Museum.

After spending two years building the model, my flying skills have been put to the test after six successful flights. Actually, I've only con-

trolled the aircraft for about 2 1/2 minutes in all! The majority of the piloting being carried out by a fellow Club Member with younger blood in his veins!

The model has two problems: one it travels very fast - in fact we estimate in excess of 100 mph and due to the grass strip it has difficulty taking off! After various changes to the undercarriage, the final arrangement was to catapult the plane using 30 metres of elastic bungie connected to a three wheel dolly with the plane on top. Much to the amusement of the spectators, the first attempt left the plane behind with the dolly shooting down the runway on its own!



Trainee Ground Crew Granddaughter, Kathryn - 2 1/2 Years Old With A Proud Grandad

The latest addition to the model's power is a miniature turbo jet with turbine speeds in excess of 100,000 revs. per minute! I hope one day to have two of these side by side instead of the more conventional piston engine currently being used.

As Treasurer of the Central Model Flying Club, I enjoy flying at a beautiful location in Arley, Shropshire - overlooking the River Severn Valley - about three miles South of Hampton Loade Treatment Works.

Flying model aircraft can involve mechanical, radio, computer, electronic an aeronautical engineering, plenty of outdoor fresh air and of course, flying the plane! If there is anyone who would

like to be the next Tom Cruise Top Gun or there is a budding Amy Johnson who aspires to flying vintage models - then contact me on Extension 2470 I would be only too pleased to help in any way I can.

John Lindley

SSW TABLE TENNIS TEAM

Perhaps the most successful (and least known) of the Company's sporting activities is the Table Tennis Team and after all the recent successes we thought it was time we blew our own trumpet a little.



The Team plays in the Walsall and District Winter League between September and April and has occasionally played in the West Bromwich Summer League.

This Season has seen a lot of changes, with Paul Mitchell (Computers) and Mark Cutler (Workshops) making their debuts in joining regulars Matthew Bates (Engineering) and Paul Smith (Computers) and reserve Andy Meadows (Engineering). The growth of the Enterprise Company has meant that the Team also had to change venue from above the gym to the canteen. Home Matches are every other Monday night.

Our grateful thanks go to the Social Club for the purchase of a new Olympic Competition Table to replace the previous one which was in a considerably worn state after many years of good service.

Last Season saw some excellent performances in finishing runners up in Division 3 - thereby gaining promotion to Division 2. The individual averages were also won by Paul Smith, with a superb sixty wins from sixty-six games played. Paul also went on to win the Divisional Singles Title at the Annual Walsall Tournament. We are now playing at our highest level ever - and not doing too badly at the time of going to press!

The League is always after more Teams and we'd love to be able to field a second side - we did in the past. So if you are interested - why not give us a ring?

Achievements In Recent Years

- 1990/91 Division 6 League & League Cup Runners Up
- 1991/92 Division 5 League Runners Up
- 1992/93 Division 4 Annual Tournament:
Singles Title - P. Smith
- 1993/94* Division 7 Champions
Individual Averages - P. Smith
Division 6 Runners Up
Individual Averages - P. Smith
Division 6/7 Cup Runners Up
Division 6/7 Annual Tournament:
Singles Title - P. Smith
Division 4 - W/Brom. Summer League:
Individual Averages - P. Smith
- 1994/95 Division 5 - W/Brom. Summer League Champions
- 1995/96 South Staffs In "No Trophies" Shock!
- 1996/97 Division 3 Runners Up - Promotion to Division 2

*This year saw a one Season experimental reorganisation into 9 Divisions with promotion and relegation at Christmas - it was not popular!

Paul Smith

Ed: All persons interested should contact Matthew Bates - Ex. 2310 or Paul Smith - Ex.5090 and don't be shy girls - we have had Lady Team Members in the past and hopefully will again in the future!

SOUTH STAFFS WATER GOLF SOCIETY



The end of another wonderful season has arrived so just a few words to let you know how the golf progressed in 1997.

Teams were entered in three Charity Competitions and the National Water Championship as well as our usual three full day outings. In addition, Internal Singles and Fourball Competitions were enjoyed by Members who wished to partake. Our three main outings were well supported with an average of 32 Members (each one hoping to impress and perhaps obtain a call up for the Ryder Cup Team) attending the venues.

Spring Outing - The Terry McAllister Trophy Venue - "The Shropshire"

The Season started on a cloudy day just outside Telford. The weather forecast was grim but not enough to dampen the spirits of South Staffs Golfers intent on enjoying their day out with their workmates - no matter what!

The afternoon contest for the Trophy, in honour of our late President, was keenly contested and even when the rain eventually came some favourable scores were still returned.

Competition Results:-

1st	J. McGuckin
2nd	P. Morgan
3rd	D. Glen
Longest Drive	J. Griffiths
Nearest the Pin	D. Glen

Summer Outing - Presidents Trophy Venue - Hagley Golf Club

July 4th found us at Hagley and although our President, Mr. Whitty, was unable to attend the days golf he joined us for the evening meal, presentation and festivities.

This Course is definitely one of contrasting halves and some Members mentioned that the back nine holes were the hardest they had encountered but I think everyone was lulled into a false sense by the front nine. Exhausted Members were glad of shower and in need of the ensuing refreshments in the Clubhouse.

Competition Results:-

1st	P. Morgan
2nd	J. Griffiths
3rd	W. Reid
Nearest the Pin (1)	R. Gilbert
Nearest the Pin (2)	P. Aspley
Ladies Cup Winner	J. Piper

Autumn Outing - Captains Trophy Venue - "Druids Heath Golf Club"

September 12th saw us at our final event of the Season. The Course and facilities were prepared to the usual high standard and South Staffs Water Golf Society were given a warm welcome on our return. Once the usual banter, mickey-taking and winding up was out of the way, the golf got underway and another enjoyable day was had by all who attended. (Frank remembered the raffle tickets but lost the bill)!

Competition Results:-

1st	P. Baggaley
2nd	J. McGuckin
3rd	M. Sharpe
Nearest the Pin (1)	J. Grocock
Nearest the Pin (2)	S. Handley

Internal Competition Results:-

Singles Winner	M. Sharpe
Fourballs Winner	P. Aspley & J. McGuckin

So the season has drawn to a close. With our current membership standing at 44, we are set to expand with employees from Mech Mail signing up for next year.

Once again, we look forward with optimism to 1998.

I would like to sign off by expressing thanks to the following people for their help in making the running of the society a Team effort:-

R. Smith	Captain
P. Aspley	Handicap Secretary
F. Hall	Treasurer
I. Salmon	Secretary

Thanks also to T. Morris, J. Jerram, M. Asbury and Angie, the Photo Lady, (look for our new trophy cabinet in the Dining Room).

Finally, a thank you to Mr. J. Harris and Mr. B. Whitty for their continued support once again but the biggest thank you is to you, all our Members. Without you there would not be a Society. So get your clubs cleaned up and we'll do it all again next year!

Bill Reid
Chairman



**South Staffordshire Water
Golf Society**

RIVER DART STRUGGLE (RAFT RACE)



101's team before the off! Shelley, Mick, Carl, Tim, Julie and Kim

"Meet at Green Lane at 8.30 a.m." were the last words I heard from Tim Fletcher on Friday, 3rd October. It was Raft Race Time Again

There would be four rafts to take up the challenge on the River Dart this year. Raft No. 101 Captained by Tim Fletcher. Tims crew being Carl Reynolds, Shelley Walker, Kim Avery, Julie Warrilow and yours truly.

Raft No. 102 with Captain Rob Gutheri, Jason Vigrass, Jenny Brookhouse, Brian Greenwood, Colin Hinton and Andy Mack.

Captain Rob Sawle was in charge of Raft No. 103 with a trusty crew comprising Mike Watkins, Graham Ralph, Andy Flavell, Joanne Meadows and John Corbett.

Raft No. 111 was manned by Mec Mail with Dean Baitey, Rob Thacker, Alex Bott, Glenn Wright, Tim Abel and Kevin Darr.

Captain Tim issued his orders; "lets get em built." So before I could ask how many were injured last year, we were off. Four or five evenings later the rafts were complete even though Rob Sawles craft blew up courtesy of Mike Watkins "inflatable inner tube in a barrel" idea.

Then Tim suggested we should take the rafts on a sea trial to Blithfield Reservoir. Great idea we thought until our raft (101) promptly sank amid hoots of laughter from the other three crews. Undeterred we carried out some minor adjustments and this time took to the water successfully.

The day before the race, after an uneventful journey, we arrived at Totnes and took the rafts to the start. All went well until Rob Sawles craft was lifted from the lorry looking rather worse for wear but we managed to get some extra barrels which were hastily attached to the frame for further support. We then went back to the caravan site, our accommodation whilst in Totnes, for a few drinks before we "Hit the Town" that night. I think it best to draw a veil over the evening but suffice to say next morning due to my delicate condition, all I could manage was a cup of coffee.

Race Day had come round all too soon but with life jackets, gloves, paddles and impressive looking RAPID jumpers we made our way to the start. The river was dangerously low and we soon encountered our first obstacle - a salmon leap. We all jumped into the water and carried the raft over this with some difficulty trying to avoid the other rafts

and the rocks. We then spent most of our time in the water carrying the raft down the course (or so it seemed). We never managed to catch the other South Staffs Rafts up but that was not through lack of trying.

This year all our four rafts managed to finish - our times being:-

Raft No. 101	4 Hours 5 Minutes
Raft No. 111	4 Hours 11 Minutes
Raft No. 193	5 Hours 5 Minutes
Raft No. 101	5 Hours 37 Minutes

That evening we analysed the days events at a Twelfth Century Pub that Tim Fletcher had found. We had a meal and discussion centred on how best to get out of doing the race next year.

The drinks flowed well into the night and next morning came round a bit too soon. Once again, I missed breakfast. All the sensible crew members who had gone to bed early were busy tucking in.

Despite all of the deprivation, everybody involved put in a great deal of time and effort. But I for one am arranging to be on the "Logistics Team" next year!
Nick Smith



101 again and Captain Tim wipes a tear from his eye - perhaps its seeing the 3 other South Staffs Rafts disappearing into the distance that's causing the grief?



101's crew says "We're sure we carried our raft over most of the course!"

CRICKET AT SOUTH STAFFS

This Season saw a rather sparse programme of Matches with bad weather causing a few cancellations. The full Company side only played one full fixture - the Annual Match v Wrexham Water. This game took place at Alrewas Cricket Club and saw a rare defeat of the South Staffs side.

Our innings never really took off although the partnership between Mick Crowe and Tim Wedge gave us hope. Ben Bax and Rob Sawle also weighed in with useful contributions. However, a total of 137 was always going to be difficult to defend. Wrexham destroyed the South Staffs bowling with both Rich Hulmes and Mike Plant scoring half-centuries. Their win was achieved with only two wickets down, with dropped catches proving decisive.

On the other hand, the South Staffs Mixed XI had two victories in their two games. Our ladies again excelled with notable performances from Karen Atkinson, Sarah Birch and Julie Warrilow. For these games we had agreed rule changes with our opponents. First ball dismissals were not allowed and underarm bowling was a pre-requisite for ladies unless otherwise requested.

The undoubted highlight was Ben Bax's dismissal against the John German side. Opening the batting, Ben was out first ball to Vicky Carey. Then, realising his good fortune, contrived to get himself out to the sec-

ond ball he faced from (yes - you've guessed it) Vicky Carey. Well done Ben!!

Ed: Anyone wishing to play for the Company side or who can arrange some fixtures, contact either Mike Crowe or Gary Hazlehurst.



EDITORS JOTTINGS

Well - thats all folks! (Unless youre one of those obtuse characters who start reading from the back; in which case -welcome!)

First and foremost a big "thank you" to Julie and Jo as well as everyone in the Kitchen who are involved in feeding us so well. I'm sure that I'm the Staff's most awkward Customer. Is it my imagination or do they really look the other way whenever I walk into the Restaurant?

Anyway, thanks again folks!

You will have noticed on page twelve that we are on the lookout for

more Social Club Committee Members. Please, please do make every effort to support your Committee. It's like WaterWhat you know - neither can function without you and it would be such a pity to let the social side just fade away. I mean take a look at the lack of social trips that have been organised this year! Its only because there are not enough Committee folk to take up the cudgel!

So now youve been warned! I want to see the next WaterWhat full of sizzling social scenes!

Angi

P.S: What about that for a bit of alliteration - eh?

Merry Christmas Everyone



and Happy 1998