

MEMORIES OF DERBY CORPORATION WATER DEPARTMENT

There was a small number of staff at No.1 Tenant Street when I began working as a Junior Shorthand Typist in the mid 50s. Several of the male members of staff had been working in the Department before War Service:

Richard H. Appleby;

Gordon Ingram had been in the Air Force;

Norman Bennett, the Army, with service in Italy and Iraq, and

Bernard R. P. Francis, a member of The Sherwood Foresters Regiment, had served in Burma.

Several of the staff had previously worked in the Water Department's office in Full Street - under another Engineer and Manager, Mr. T. Farrington.

The Tenant Street offices became available after the Town Clerk's Department moved to the newly completed Council House in Corporation Street in the late 1940s. That move had been delayed due to the Second World War. The Council House building was occupied by Army personnel during that period.

(Thurs. 22 Sept.2005 - DET)



Derbeian's Diary

Maxwell Craven

Yesterday saw the opening, by the Duke of Gloucester, of Derby's civil marriage parlour. Readers will have no trouble recalling the appallingly inadequate and atrociously positioned Register Office provided just off Traffic Street by the county council.

In the days before Mr Major's government allowed all manner of places to apply for licences to perform marriages, those not wishing to marry in church were obliged to make do with that banal brick building and be photographed against a background of traffic, access roads and the back end of much of the Eagle Centre, never much to look at even from the front. Once the current redevelopment was under way, the city made one of its more inspired decisions and decided to renovate the former Royal Oak inn in the Market Place to fill this role and a jolly good job they have made of it, too – and at minimal expense. So what do we know of the building?

The first documentary mention occurs in October 1732, although it may well be somewhat older. The building which survived until 1889 was a three-storey affair built after 1708 and before about 1730.

The name, of course, came about following the Restoration of Charles II in 1660 and commemorates the monarch's experiences hiding in the oak tree from September 7-8, 1651, at Boscobel House, following the defeat at the Battle of Worcester on the third. Thus the pub could have been renamed or even newly founded in a previous building on the site at almost any time between 1660 and Queen Anne's reign. That it was a busy inn during its 18th-century heyday is confirmed by the fact that it has the fifth-highest



● PUBLIC SERVICE: The former Royal Oak inn has been sympathetically transformed into its latest use as the city's Register Office.

Restoration success

1769, Patrick Goodall of Nottingham, a specialist farrier – really a veterinary surgeon – in 1771 and William Arnold of Newborough, Staffordshire, a bleaching expert. It wasn't until about 1806 that Derby acquired its own

licence after the passage of the Licensing Act was granted in 1842. By 1889 the pub had been bought by the Burton brewing firm of James Eadie. That this firm had their own fire

the gables proclaims that the inn was finished in 1890 but the council decided to compulsorily purchase the new inn due to a dispute over the sanitary arrangements. The sum eventually agreed in June 1894 was £14,100.

in 1921 on the site of the inn's redundant stable block. In its new, municipal, role, dictated because of its proximity to the Guildhall, then the hub of borough administration and ceremony, it was remembered by Freda, the daughter of

General Office was on the ground floor behind the three windows between the doorways.

Mr. Appleby's office (on the first floor) looked out on to the balcony – which could be accessed by climbing over the window cill! We did this to watch a procession once.

Mr. Edwards' office was behind the two windows facing onto the Market Place.

Ministry of Ag.&Fd's office was behind the large doorway on the ground floor and the window beyond.

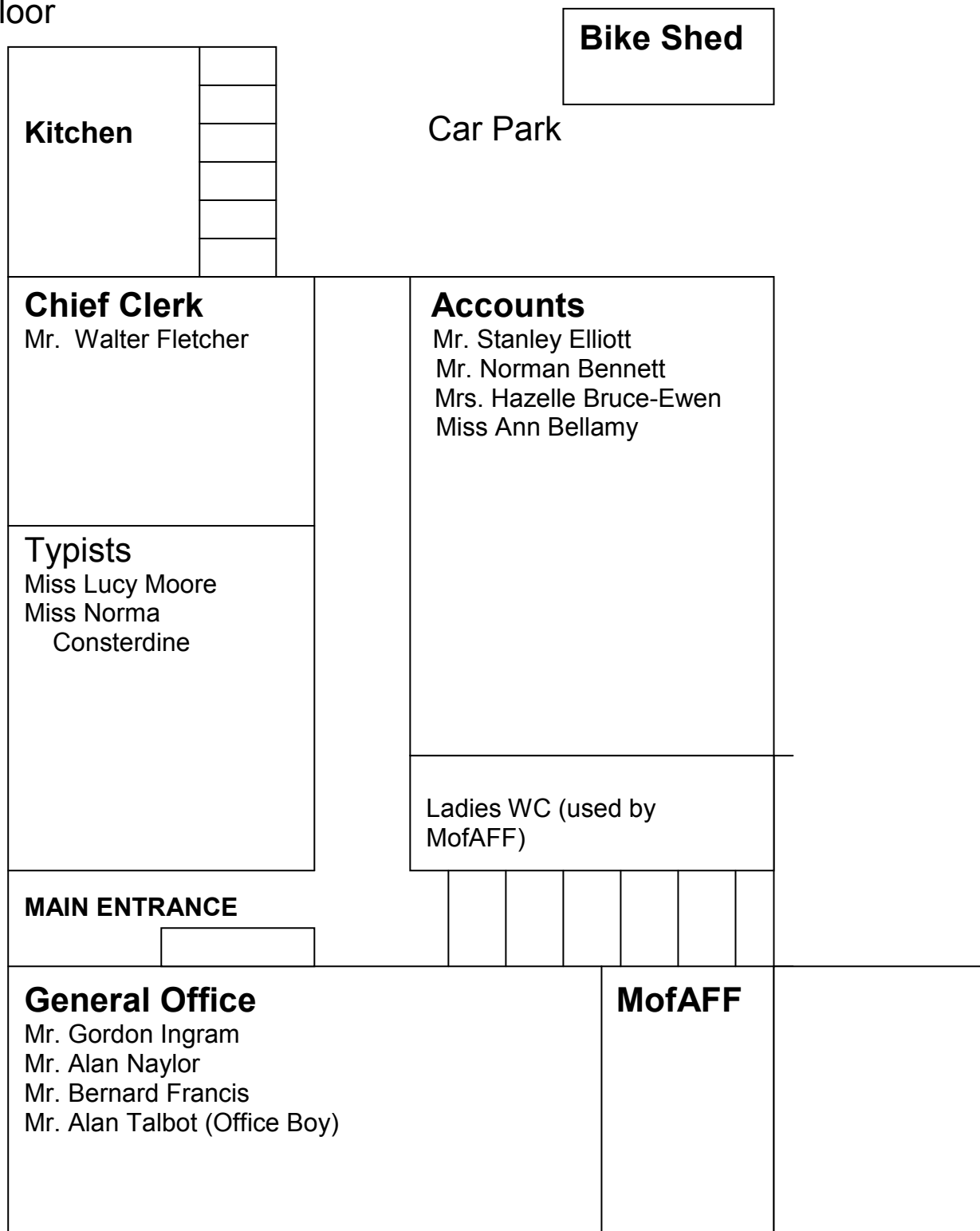
The top floor may have come into use after the SDWB was formed.

The windows that can just be seen in the brick building to the extreme left were the Engineering/Drawing Office.

On the next page is a diagram of the personnel in each of the offices of Derby Corporation Water Department

DERBY CORPORATION WATER DEPARTMENT TENANT
STREET, DERBY OFFICE LAYOUT – 1955

Ground Floor

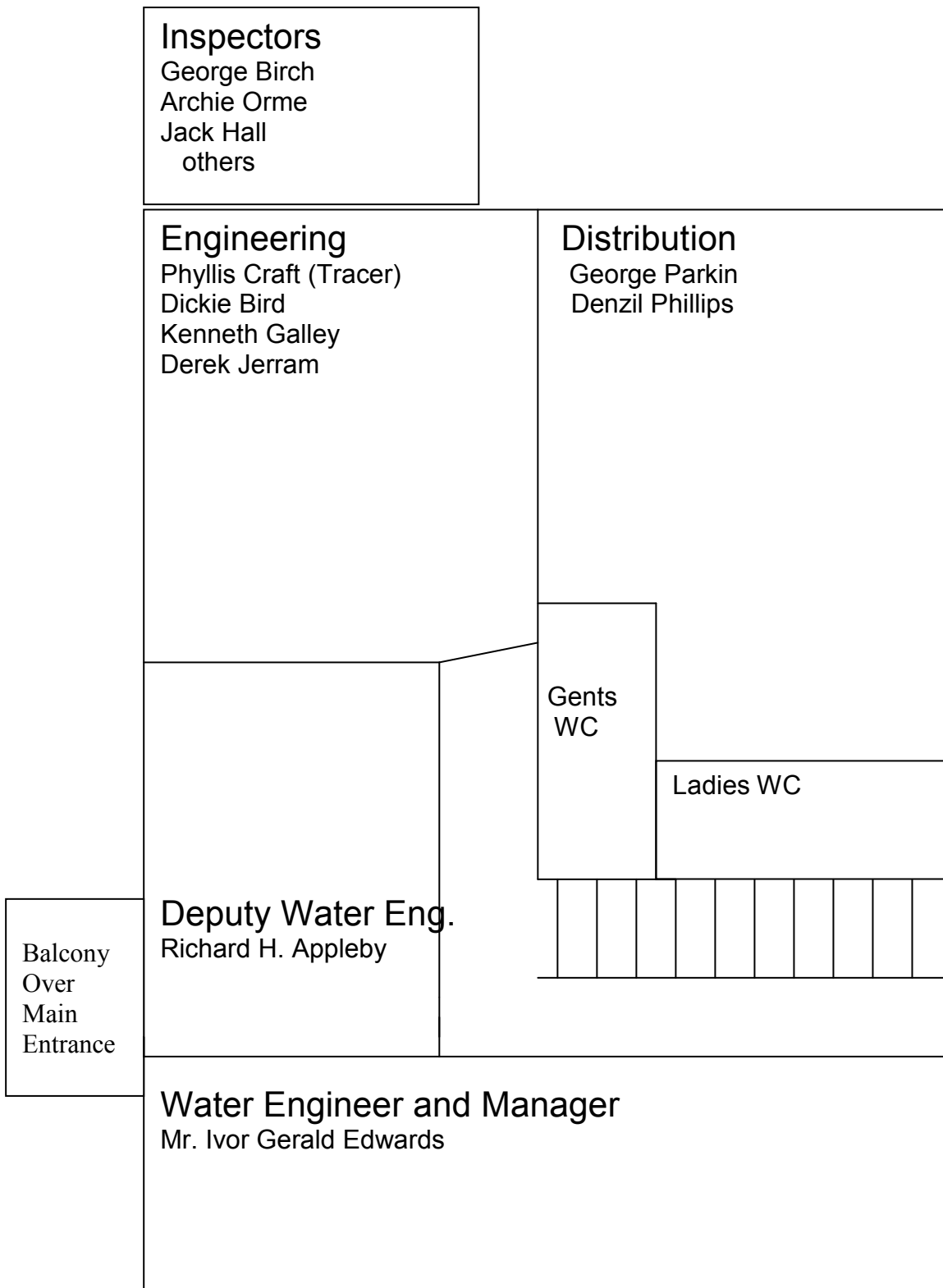


MofAFF – Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food occupied at least two offices beyond the General Office.

The boxed area by the General Office was where the public came and into which the office staff went to sign the Time Book. Those upstairs did not sign in!

TENANT STREET OFFICES, DERBY UPPER FLOOR

(1955)



Mr. Hugh Richardson was in charge of Little Eaton Pumping Station and Mr. George W. Smith was at Duke Street Depot, Derby with Mr. Bill Potter as his Deputy.

There was some expansions and staff changes over the years –

Audrey Stafford from Darley Abbey came to work in the General Office (an innovation because there had only been men previously)

Valerie Halliwell joined the General Office Staff

Gregory Kilvington (ex Borough Police) came to the General Office and later transferred to the Council's Treasurer's Dept. – from where he retired some years ago. He had been in my class at Pear Tree Junior School!

Marie Ashton joined as a Junior Shorthand-Typist - she later became Mrs. Roger Clayton

Sheila Tickner joined as a Shorthand-Typist

Jeancame to the Accounts Office and can remember Eric Bamford.

Mr. Eric Bamford (probably replaced Stanley Elliott after he died in 1964)

Paul Tonks from Kilburn was an Office Boy

David Eaton joined as a Trainee Engineer

Dave Mabbott worked in Distribution

Mr. Alex Micallef (from Egypt) came to work in Distribution with George Parkin and Denzil Phillips

Jack Allison was a Turncock/Turnkey

There was a workman named Phelps.

With the expansion of the organization in April 1961 to become the **South Derbyshire Water Board** additional staff were appointed in addition to those members of staff "taken over" from the various local authorities. Most of these people worked in the depots. However, there was Mr. S. B. Jowett from Shardlow Rural District Council and Mr.....Head of the Ilkeston and Heanor Water Board based at the waterworks at Homesford.

New Staff were

Mr. Ken Woodall from Derby Corporation Treasurer's Dept. – Treasurer

Mr. Brian Williamson from Derby Corporation Treasurer's to be Mr. Woodall's assistant

Mr. Ken Rodwell from Leicester City Waterworks – Head of Distribution

Mr. Edward Dodd to be Mr. Rodwell's Deputy

Mr. Hugh Tapping came from the Borough Treasurer's to the General Office

Mr. R. Fuller from to Head Engineering

Mr. Edward? Howarth to become Chemist followed in 1964? By Miss Joan Duggan

Mr. Gordon Bennett came to deal with legal matters (Clerk to the Water Board)

Mr. Howard Bradshaw (from Derby Corporation) eventually became Chief Clerk after Mr. Fletcher's retirement

Miss Sybil..... took up the position of telephonist operating the telephone exchange which then was set up in the original Typists' Office and the Typists moved to the old Min.of Ag.F&Fd offices.

Michael Hope to be Mr. Woodall's Trainee

Mr. Jepson (there were two people with this name – one called Barry) – I think one in the Accounts Office.

Later - during the 1960's

Mick Coxon transferred from the Borough Surveyor's Office to become Committee Clerk to the Water Board in succession to Gordon Bennett.

Miss Joan Duggan became the Chemist based at Little Eaton after Mr. Howarth moved on. Miss Pat Flood came as a Shorthand-Typist and worked in the area previously occupied by Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

The office Caretaker was Mrs. Fairburn who had a flat above the Bicycle shop (5a Tenant Street). She made the coal fires in the mornings. The staff had to keep the fires going during the day! Coal was provided in buckets in the offices. Mrs. Fairburn originally "did the tea" - but it was soon made the job of the Junior Shorthand-Typist! Interesting - carrying a very large teapot and cups and saucers up the stairs to the Manager's Office and to the other offices on that level. I remember having to stoop down to place the tray on the carpet

Outside Mr. Edwards' office - there was **no** table on which to rest the tray!

The Depot for stores of pipes and other materials was in Duke Street (by the River Derwent) and this was where the workmen - Main Layers and Watermen were based. In charge of the Depot was Mr. George W. Smith and his Deputy Mr. William (Bill) Potter. Requests for orders to be sent from Tenant Street for new stocks of concrete and spun iron pipes would be sent to Stanton & Staveley, Ltd of Ilkeston and to The Clay Cross Company.

When I first joined I remember hearing about "Night Watchmen" who sat in front of braziers overnight protecting the open trenches.

With the expansion of the Borough boundary Derby's Water Department grew bigger and additional staff were appointed.

David Eaton was appointed to the Engineering side; Hazel Bruce-Ewen joined the Accounts Section; Alan Talbot (who died at in his early 20s of a brain tumor) came as "Office Boy" in the General Office followed by Frank Pemberton (whose dad was an Inspector) and Barry Tonks from Kilburn. (Probably not in that order!)

The General Office expanded with the recruitment of Miss Valerie Halliwell and Miss Audrey Stafford. Mr. Alan Naylor who had been in the Department since leaving school was appointed "Mayor's Officer" so transferred to The Council House.

A new Junior Shorthand-Typist was added to the two existing members - Marie Ashton (later Mrs. Roger Clayton). Later, Sheila Ticker (becoming Mrs. Berry) came from another department in The Council to add to the expanding number of Typists.

A big event for the Department was the opening of the extended Water Treatment Works at Little Eaton - supervised by a Scot - Mr. Hugh Richardson. With the more sophisticated systems in place a

new appointment of Chemist was made and the first occupant of this post was a Mr. Edward Howarth - based at the Treatment Works.

1st April, 1961 - the day "South Derbyshire Water Board" was born - was Easter Sunday and that particular morning a group of us (including Mr. Edwards, the Water Engineer and Manager) were to be found in one of the Committee Rooms at The Council House walking around a very large table

picking up individual sheets of "stencilled" papers to -collate them into a document (presumably the one inaugurating the new Board. (I do remember being asked whether I'd been to church that morning!))

With the new organization came new staff - Mr. Kenneth Rodwell came from Leicester Waterworks; he had a Deputy - Mr. Edward Dodd. Mr. Raymond Fuller was appointed - but when his Section expanded additional Office accommodation was found near "The Flowerpot" pub in King Street above what was then a Tyre Depot. Mr. William Webley was appointed from Manchester Corporation Waterworks after George Parkin (a Capstan smoking Lancastrian) must have retired. Denzil Phillips then had a new Section leader. (Denzil was working for the Water Department when I joined!)

Because the Board became independent of the Borough Council a Treasurer was employed - Mr. Ken Woodall transferred from the Council's Treasurer's Department with Mr. Brian Williamson as his Assistant and a Trainee - Mr. Michael Hope.

Mr. Hugh Tapping took over the position vacated by Gordon Ingram (who retired on ill health grounds because of MS). Mr. Gordon Bennett became responsible for dealing with all the Committee work; Miss Joan Duggan joined the team as the Board's second Chemist after Mr. Howarth moved on - Joan was also based at the Little Eaton Treatment works.

With the expansion of staff came the need for additional office space. By this time the staff of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food had moved out after their Wartime task had been completed and the Water Board took over the empty offices facing the Market Place and below the large office occupied by the Water Engineer and Manager. At this stage, too, more offices on the second floor were brought into use (I believe previously used by Derby Sketching Club!)

Another Shorthand-Typist joined - Miss Patricia Flood - and due to lack of space in the Typists' office she was placed with other clerical staff in the newly acquired offices on the ground floor. As time went by all the Typists went into this office and later a Clerk who was attached to the Typists - Miss Sheila Allen, originally from Swinscoe near Ashbourne. Sheila operated such innovations as the copying machine (originally a trough filled with liquid, the paper being fed around rollers, and the "Gestetner" stencil machine that was used to produce numerous copies of typed documents such as Specifications for Water Towers and Committee papers. Mrs. Sheila O'Mahoney replaced Miss Flood and Mrs.

O'Mahoney eventually became Mr. Edwards' Secretary. She transferred to Raynesway and was still at "The Board" when Mr. Edwards (who was semi-retired by this time) died whilst lunching at home.

Norma Consterdine

February, 2012