



'ANYONE FOR TEA?', ask the Head Office four—left to right—Edie Philpott, Catering Supervisor Elsie Campbell, Kath Neale and Dot Hartford.

The Secret Lives of Elsie and Co

Go anywhere you like on any of the eleven floors in Richmond House—Southampton headquarters of ACTS—and you'll be hard-pushed to find anybody who doesn't know Elsie Campbell and Edie Philpott. They're as much a part of the furnishings as the model containership in the entrance hall or the four-foot cheese plants that seem to thrive against all the odds on every floor.

Elsie Campbell joined ACTS in July, 1973, five weeks before Richmond House opened for business, and for a time commuted daily to the company's then headquarters in London to prepare herself for the job of catering supervisor.

Edie joined her a few weeks later—not in the least content to sink into oblivion because she had just retired, after 21 years, from her job at a big cable works. (She was there making the cables, NOT the tea).

It was not until then that Elsie and Edie, complete strangers before that first meeting, discovered a most remarkable coincidence.

Edie and her husband had had one son—killed by rebels while doing his National Service in Jamaica. And Elsie and husband Bill,

(turn to page two)

Dave scores Photo Fivers 'double'

Dave Walker, systems analyst in Management Services at Head Office, was a double winner in the recent 'Contacts' Holiday Pictures competition.

The judges voted Dave winner in two categories—for 'best colour print' and 'best colour transparency'—so he gets two prizes of film worth £5.

Winner in the section for 'best humorous picture' was Jill Dinham, revenue accounts clerk at Southampton, who also gets film worth £5.

Because of the disappointingly low number of entries, the judges decided to award no prize in the section for black-and-white pictures.

Due to pressure on space, it is not possible to reproduce winning pictures in this issue of 'Contacts', but we hope to do so in the next issue.



Eric Russell

ERIC TAKES OVER AT TILBURY

Eric Russell, who joined Ellerman Lines as an £8-a-month apprentice in 1953, has been appointed Terminal Manager at Tilbury after two years as ACTS Regional Manager at Barking.

He was a Chief Officer with Ellerman when, in 1969, he joined ACT and was attached to the Cargo Dept in London. A year later he became Cargo Superintendent at Liverpool, and after a spell in cargo handling in London was appointed Manager of Southampton Terminal in 1973.

Eric lists his hobbies as "gardening and spending time with the family". Before he left Barking, his Deputy there, Peter Gilmore, presented him with a pair of cut glass brandy glasses—and a full bottle!—on behalf of his colleagues.

THANK YOU ALL

by PETER BAINBRIDGE
(Managing Director A.C.T.S.)

The first few months of 1979 have been tough ones for ACTS and the Operating Companies that we serve. Road haulage strikes, dock disputes, appalling weather and a number of other factors have all combined firstly to bring our work virtually to a stand-still and then limit our ability to recover.

All of this has taken place at a time when competition, both in terms of volume of work and price, is hitting each of the trades with which we are involved.

ACTA has to contend with the ABC Line and a number of trans-shipment operators; BLC have the increasing presence of the ACE group and the newcomers from Taiwan, Evergreen Line; EHCL has a number of new competitors including Hellenic Line, in an already depressed trade; CAMEL are seeing intensified competition which is causing a number of company failures, and similarly in the West Indies trade, covered by CAROL, there is increased competition by foreign lines.

You can see that the position looks bleak. However, there is a better side. I firmly believe that by continued effort on our part—and we are all equally involved—we can improve the position to our advantage; hold our present workload, and be efficiently prepared to develop again as fresh opportunities arise, which they surely will. When it comes to competition, we stand comparison with the best of them.

Despite enormous difficulties, we have overcome most of the recent problems, and that does not happen by luck; it comes from your efforts.

THANK YOU.



Peter Bainbridge

Welcome to 'Actaust'—and a look at life Down Under

'Contacts' bids warm welcome to a sister journal 'Inside Actaust', published in Australia and designed to spread the gospel among staff there just as 'Contacts' does in Britain.

It's nice to note that our Australian friends are occasionally as uncertain as the rest of us. The first issue of 'Actaust' admitted frankly that nobody was quite sure about the age of the Australian company.

'When did the group start?', Actaust asked. 'Was it August, 1966, when Mr. Harley O'Regan was appointed to set up the Australian Group on behalf of ACTA in London? Or was it August, 1967, when Head Office was established in Sydney and more people joined the organisation?'

'Perhaps it was in April, 1969, when the first container of cargo was booked for transportation to the UK'.

Whatever the answer, our Australian colleagues have not let the occasion pass unnoticed. According to Actaust, a pin 'suitable for wearing on blouses, lapels, ties, etc' has been made, and a special anniversary port has been bottled. Cheers...

Vital statistics

Stories in Actaust throw a fascinating light on life Down Under. The journal reveals, for instance, that Jean Howard, switchboard operator at ACTA in Melbourne, has to get up in the middle of the night to travel by rail

from her property quite a few miles down the coast—and then has the journey home to face at the end of the day.

One of the regular callers to Melbourne reports that every time he gets through to the Melbourne switchboard, Jean seems to be counting. That's because, in between the switchboard operations, she also does the telephone accounts and mailing schedules. Actaust reports: "Jean says she counts envelopes into batches of fifty, so if you get through and hear '35, 36, 37', she's not relaying vital statistics, just counting the mail!"

He escaped

We like the sound, too of Ivan Victor Seddon, the company's senior courier in Brisbane. During the war, Ivan flew Halifax bombers from England and was shot down over German-occupied France.

He managed to contact the French Underground, staying with them for three months before escaping back to England to do 20 more operational sorties with Lancaster bombers.

He is now active in two very exclusive organisations—the Caterpillar Club, whose membership is restricted to those who have used an Irvin parachute as the only way to save their lives, and the Escapers' Society, formed by those who have actually escaped from enemy territory.

Lighter side

On the lighter side, Actaust reports that in a recent 'Polish Newsletter' issued in Canberra appeared the following quote about a new super ship coming on to the Europe-Australia run:

"The biggest and fastest liner ship in the Polish merchant fleet will arrive soon in its Virgin voyage in Australia".

And, under the heading 'Good Advice':

'IF YOU WANT TO GO COMPLETELY MAD, LISTEN TO EVERYONE'S ADVICE'.

We agree.

ELSIE, EDIE AND THE GIRLS!

(continued from page one)

then in the Army, had actually been in the same Jamaican camp when the tragedy occurred.

Elsie herself, born in Southampton, married to builder Bill, and with two sons, Tony and Peter, and two grandchildren, has spent her working lifetime so far in catering. Before joining ACTS, she was canteen assistant at the Southampton Echo, and before that was at a nurses' training college.

She and her team to-day provide a come-and-get-it or we'll-bring-it-to-you tea and light refreshment service to 'close on 300 people in Richmond House.

"It's a great job; I love it", says Elsie.

And you get a feeling that she really means it when she adds: "They're a great bunch of people. It's wonderful to be able to share in both their problems and their pleasures. It's amazing, when you get a little older, how young people turn to you to share their ups and downs.

Edie ('She's got twice as much energy as me', says Elsie) is now 65—and still does a full five-day week.

There are those in Documentary Services (and elsewhere), however, who recall with a

kind of sadistic pleasure the day Edie arrived as usual to serve tea from her urn, turned on the tap—and nothing came out. Run out of tea? No. A small quantity of leaf caught in the outlet pipe? No.

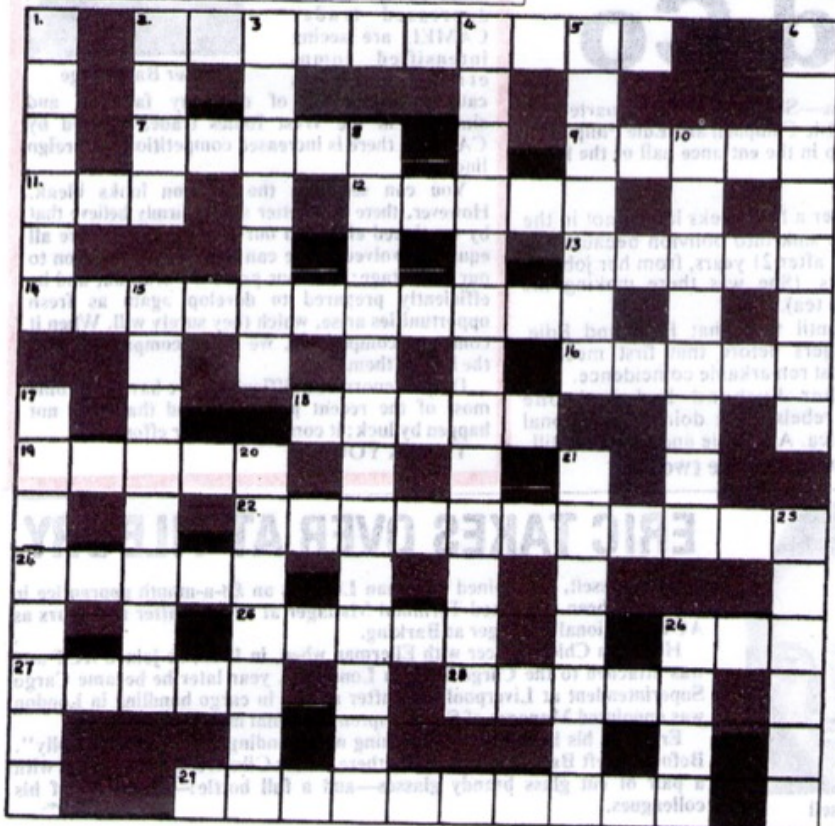
Believe it or not, somebody who shall be nameless had accidentally left a tea towel in the urn!

Almost as familiar these days as Elsie and Edie to the occupants of Richmond House are the two other headquarter Tea Ladies—Dot Hart and Kath Neale.

Dot—married with three children and two grandsons—first set out with her trolley in April last year, and Kath (married with four children) joined the company three months later.

THE 'CONTACTS' CROSSWORD

We have had many requests to include another Crossword in 'Contacts'. Here it is. Though our main hope is that readers will have fun trying to solve the clues, there will be prizes for the first two correct answers opened. Send your entries to: 'Contacts' Crossword, c/o Mrs. Lynne Lisney, Personnel Department, at Southampton, to reach her by May 25 at the latest. All the entries will then be 'shuffled' and the first correct solution opened will win £3, the second £2.



CLUES

ACROSS

- 2 This artillery leap could make one act prematurely (4,3,3)
- 7 Scottish boss man takes a beginner first class on the road (5)
- 9 Seize and hold fast (5)
- 11 Allowed on court (3)
- 12 He's liable to give the glad eye (5)
- 13 You could see a race meeting in Anna's cottage, if you wish (5)
- 14 All cut up? Yes, certainly (11)
- 16 Species of wheat (5)
- 18 A quiet kind of pain, but fruity, too (5)
- 19 It's a bit extravagant to leave the route! (5)
- 22 Take tape and price it if you want to be forced into hasty action (11)
- 24 A feeling of boredom (5)
- 25 Fabric network (5)
- 26 A real snake in the spa.
- 27 Kind of humming bird (5)
- 28 Undresses backwards to get a bit of rest! (5)
- 29 Let base get tangled for this male insect (4,6)

Down

- 1 Song that puts everything in a bad light (6)
- 2 A bit of a jerk! (4)
- 3 You could have an unusual grim tea with this copper (6)
- 4 What devilish goings on! (4,9)
- 5 You wouldn't be looking back if you were on this (7)
- 6 Great or small, look after his comforts! (8)
- 8 The kind of duplicity you'd expect from a card sharper (6,7)
- 10 You might put a film in the judge's private chamber! (2,6)
- 15 Take guard from the line sent here (8)
- 17 Conifers could make this kind of medicine (8)
- 20 Low expression used in the pit he talked of yesterday (7)
- 21 Cut up (again!) (7)
- 23 Not one to argue with! (6)
- 26 Recess that makes a kind of spring to the East (4)

Why classical Jane is a Beatles fan

A girl who sang a solo at the Royal Albert Hall at the tender age of seven (she was appearing with Newham College of Music choir at the time) has joined Container Control at Barking.

She is Jane Cooke, who seems to have developed the urge to make music despite the fact that neither of her parents is in any great degree musically inclined. An accomplished violinist (she was learning to play the violin also at the age of seven) and pianist (she got her Grade 7 certificate with three set pieces at the Royal College of Music), Jane enjoys both jazz and classics.

Her favourites—"modern classics like those composed by the Beatles".



IT'S TIME FOR A FEW HOME TRUTHS . . .

If you want your wife to listen to you, try talking in your sleep.

A pedestrian is a car owner with a wife and two daughters.

It was American wit Robert Benchley who said: "It took me fifteen years to discover I had no talent for writing, but I couldn't give it up because by that time I was too famous".

And playwright George Bernard Shaw who vouchsafed: "The only way to avoid being miserable is not to have enough leisure to wonder whether you are happy or not".

Why is it that politics is the only profession for which no

preparation is thought necessary?

The only trouble about being able to read a woman like a book is that a chap is liable to forget his place.

A woman is a person who reaches for a chair when she answers the telephone.

And, finally, a question we might all make of ourselves:

If you think you think, ask yourself what is the greatest thought you ever thought—and then listen to the silence . . .

Jill plays with fire in a good cause

Basildon Deputy Regional Manager Mike Mackay got his priorities very right when he invited Nu-Swift Fire Officer Peterson to organise a demonstration of fire-fighting equipment and techniques at Northgate House.

All members of Basildon staff had a chance to see a colour film on fire-fighting, with specific examples of what to do—AND what not to do in the event.

Three types of fire extinguisher were displayed in the car park adjoining the office, and Senior Data Operator Jill Rogers, as our picture below shows, demonstrated what it is like to 'play with fire'.

Though it was almost 20 degrees below on the day of the demonstration, more than one spectator turned up without an overcoat . . .



Jill Rogers, Senior Data Operator at Basildon, demonstrates her fire-fighting technique.

The Music Man

Railways, tennis and music are the hobbies of John Brooks, who has joined Hugh Townsend as Assistant Traffic Manager in the Operations Department at Head Office.

John studied for a B.A. Hons degree in History and Politics at Warwick University, and then joined British Steel.

He plays both guitar and piano and is an active member of the Methodist Church. For three years he has been leader of a youth group in Billingham.



John Brooks

John and his wife Susan plan to move South as soon as they find the right home.



THE DAY they got together on parade—Basildon Regional Manager Norman Cooper and son Simon.

A day to remember for Norman and Son

The 60th anniversary of the signing of the First World War Armistice (November 11) last year rekindled memories for the now dwindling band of survivors to whom that Armistice brought such relief.

It was also a day which will live long in the memories of Major N. A. Cooper TD, Intelligence Corps (V)—now ACTS Regional Manager at Basildon—and his son, Corporal Simon L. Cooper, Life Guards, who early on that dark, damp morn made their way to the Honorable Artillery Barracks in the City of London to take part in one of London's greatest free shows, the Lord Mayor's Procession.

As well as it being the Anniversary, the new Lord Mayor, Sir Kenneth Cork, was himself a member of the Honorable Artillery Company TA and served throughout the 1939-45 War, so it was only natural that the flavour of the procession should be strongly representative of the Armed Services.

"The spectacle of all the Navy, Army and Air Force units forming up in their many and varied uniforms was absolutely splendid, bringing a touch of remarkable colour and excitement to the sombre surroundings," says Norman Cooper.

"Once the procession got under way, we found ourselves marching through hordes of excited, cheering crowds—an experience never to be forgotten."

When the parade halted at the Law Courts, where the Lord Mayor and his attendants took lunch, father Norman and son Simon, dismounted, met up for a quick beer together before re-joining their units and the march back to the Mansion House.

Simon has since completed his service with the Life Guards and Norman is due to retire from service with the Volunteers around the time this issue of "Contacts" goes to Press.

The Lord Mayor's show, therefore, was the first and last occasion on which the two could appear together on parade.

SOUTHAMPTON 400 CELEBRATE

Some 400 members of Southampton staff and their guests enjoyed a packed programme at the Head Office dinner and dance at the Polygon Hotel.

Guests were welcomed by Managing Director Peter Bainbridge and among those present were ACTS Chairman Gordon Reid and Mrs. Reid and Deputy Chairman William Slater and Mrs. Slater.

After the traditional turkey and Christmas pudding, guests danced to a five-piece group, As You Like It, and there was also a discotheque.

Dinner, dance—and prizes

Prizes won in competitions, sporting and otherwise, conducted during the year were presented at a highly-successful annual dinner/dance held by Barking ACTS at the Mercury Motor Inn.



Winners were: Paul Dines (darts), Ron Clarke (table tennis singles), R. Munro and B. Giffin (table tennis doubles), Peter Gilmore (chess) and Sue Jackson—outright winner of the Bake-a-Cake contest.

CONGRATULATIONS to a number of proud mothers and fathers. To Bob Hale (S.C.A.) on the arrival of son Peter (pictured left); to Maria Dyster,

formerly of Container Control, on the birth of her son Paul, who weighed in at 8lb 4oz; and to Julia Rivett (Accounts Clerk) on the birth of son Matthew, who weighed 6lb 7oz. on arrival.

IT'S A 'FAMILY' WEDDING FOR GARY AND ELAINE

The marriage of Gary Hockley and Elaine Taylor was quite a Barking ACTS 'family' affair. Gary works in Imports and Elaine was formerly in Exports. Best man at their wedding was Cargo Assistant Graham Crouch, who has been a friend of Gary ever since they were at school together.

LIVING £30 A

THE month was September and the year 1974 when, armed only with my mosquito net and safari suit, clutching plane tickets in one hand and my wife of five weeks by the other, I set off for South Africa.

Why pick South Africa? Indeed, why emigrate at all—especially with a wife who hadn't really got used to the idea of being married in her own part of the world, let alone in some far distant corner of it that she didn't even know!

I suspect that in everybody's life, at one time or another, a sense of adventure comes rushing to the fore. It certainly did in my case. I began to think there might be more money to be earned by going abroad. That prospects all round might be better. That the sun might shine more days of the year and the grass might be greener without even the hard work of making it so.

At any rate, I was determined to go and see for myself, and as I had visited Durban and Cape Town as a crew member aboard the P and O liner Orcades, it seemed natural to choose South Africa.

The qualms

My new wife, of course, had the inevitable qualms. Would she be able to get her usual make of soap flakes? Would the South Africans sell her favourite wheaty oats? The legs began to wobble and the heart to flutter.



Stephanie Hedaux—whisked off to S. Africa after five weeks wed.

But when we arrived at Johannesburg, it was nothing like we had expected (almost feared). No lions roamed the perimeter fence. No snakes slithered up the trouser leg.

But, by golly, it was hot. We were soon to learn that in the Transvaal Summer, which lasts from September to March temperatures regularly rocket well into the nineties.

Having relatives in Mondeor, South of Jo'burg, meant that we were not immediately faced with the problem of finding somewhere to live. Neither was finding a job as difficult as we had imagined it would be.

"Steph" had wanted to carry on as a children's nurse, but as this did not pay as well as office work, she started at the Prudential (Yes, they operate there as well!) at a basic salary, even in those days, of about £50 a week.

After a week-end honeymoon in Oxfordshire ('Ron Clarke wouldn't let me have any more time off', says Gary), the couple moved into their new home in Stanford-le-Hope, Essex.

IT UP IN S. AFRICA FOR MONTH

For myself, I took a job at a local freight-forwarding agency, responsible for mining equipment arriving in Botswana. The pay was only fair, but it was a start. (Had I been a bee-keeper, believe it or not, the pay would have been much better!).

We found that wages generally were higher and average prices about the same as in the U.K., giving a better all-round standard of living.

Petrol from coal

Clothing was among the most expensive items, with petrol about the same as in the U.K. One brand, however, was available about fivepence cheaper than the rest. Manufactured from coal, its only fault was that every time you drove your car it smelt just like paraffin burning!!

With earning power organised, our next job

by

LES HEDAUX

who looks back from Tilbury on the time he and his young wife spent in S. Africa



was to get a roof of our own over our heads. Friends again came to our help and we were soon moving into a fully-furnished flat, with garage and a garden the size of a safari park. Cost—THIRTY POUNDS A MONTH.

Don't get the wrong idea, however. We were lucky, the influence and background knowledge of our friend enabling us to find a 'snip'. Flats in town, particularly in the famous Hillbrow area—often described as the most-populated square mile in Africa—can cost around £90 a month. As in Britain, girls (especially those from



The Hedaux home in Mondeor. Nestling beneath the mountains, the furnished flat they rented for £30 a month is in the house on the left.

England) tend to club together and share the costs. And they could afford to do so, a good typist secretary then taking home something like £400 a month.

Cars washed away

Wherever we went in those days, friends (mostly expatriates) asked the same questions. What were the latest fashions in England? What was No 1 in the record charts? How were Manchester United getting on?

However, we just could not get used to the violent thunderstorms which seemed to arrive with clockwork precision throughout the African Summer.

When caught out in the car by a storm, we decided that the only thing to do was pull into the side of the road and pray! On one occasion, hailstones the size of tennis balls came crashing down and on inspection later we found the car covered with dents which had almost wrecked it.

It has even been known for cars to be completely washed away by storms which, though they are usually over in 30 to 50 minutes, are frequently accompanied by thunder and lightning. So often are homes struck that all are fitted with lightning conductors, just in case.

Holidays in South Africa are usually spent at nearby pleasure resorts where a Rondavel (a

round hut, with thatched roof and, normally, two bedrooms, bathroom and lounge) can be rented for about £40 a month.

The Rondavel has no kitchen, but there are open-air facilities for cooking Boerewors (spicy sausages) or 'Braai Vleis', which roughly translated means burned meat! This is steak or lamb cooked over a charcoal fire—and despite the African name for it, it is delicious.

'Sweeney' dubbed

It is a little disconcerting to find television programmes in South Africa split into half Afrikaans and half English throughout the evening, though most of our own most popular programmes, like Kojak, Starsky and Hutch and The Bionic Man are all shown there. It can be most amusing to watch a dubbed version of 'The Sweeney'!

As with television, schooling in most areas is divided into those speaking English and those speaking Afrikaans, with a high priority given to sport. The Afrikaans prefer Rugby to soccer and baseball to cricket, and with most homes having pools in their back gardens, swimming naturally comes high on the list.

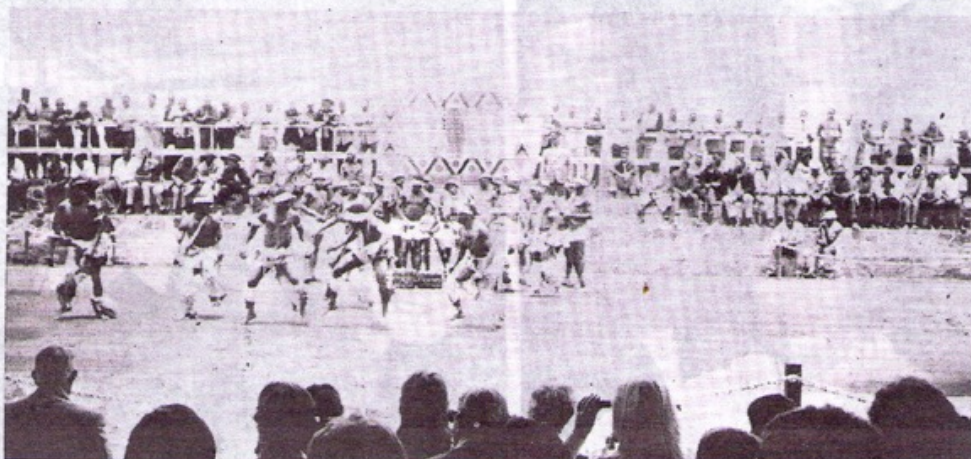
Generally speaking, houses are bigger than in England, many of them bungalow style with four or more bedrooms and at least two bathrooms. Most people have black servants and we discovered that in those days those who lived in were being paid at a rate of about £50 a month.

For a very wide variety of reasons, most of them tied up with my family, my wife and I finally decided that we must return to Britain. We did so with mixed feelings. I will always think of South Africa as one of the most beautiful countries in the world, and we shall forever miss things like the sunshine, the Good Life we were able to live, and the many, many friends we made and with whom we still keep in touch.

Most of our disappointments there involved officialdom in one way or another—things like agonising income tax returns and the fact that on one occasion my driving licence took eighteen months to arrive! All kinds of niggling problems like these.

But we will never regret going—nor chide ourselves for coming back. If people ask which three things we missed most while out there, my answer is always—our families, 'Coronation Street' and pie and mash!

But you can't have everything...



SUNDAY AFTERNOON SPECTACULAR—ritual dances being performed at a goldmine near Johannesburg.



EFFICIENCY goes with the good looks in the 7th floor typing pool. Left to right: Julie Glasspool (whose sister is also with ACTS); baby of the department Kim Brown; Mary Cowell and sister-in-law Angela Cowell (Mary married Angela's brother Tommy); Claire Wallace; and Ann Judd.

THE TEAM BEHIND THE TEAM AT SOTON

by LESTER CARROLL

VISITING ACTS headquarters at Richmond House, Southampton, after visiting, in turn, the company's many regional offices throughout Britain is a bit like calling on the stewards of the National Racing Board after a few days at the races.

The atmosphere, as one would expect, is quite different. It is in the regions (as at the races) that the action happens. Everybody involved is much closer to that action. A feeling of hustle and bustle is both unmistakable and inevitable.

Richmond House, on the other hand, is the administrative nerve centre at which policy is decided and major decisions taken on problems which can be varied as they are complex.

It is a headquarters built up to offer guidance and a wide range of services to all members of the ACTS 'family'—from computer facilities to staff recruitment, from staff training to help and advice with all kinds of industrial relations.

It is a nerve centre without which, whether they fully realise it or not, the regional 'limbs' would not be able to function as efficiently as they do, if at all.

£1,000 a month

It is not, however, our purpose here (nor have we the space) to look closely at the policy and decision-makers, but rather to turn the spotlight on those without whom the policy-makers themselves would be hard-pressed to carry on.

PEOPLE, FOR INSTANCE, LIKE Harry Scammell, the Head Courier in charge of post and despatches, and his right hand man Mike

King, unfortunately absent on the day of my visit (it was apparently his turn for the London run!).

Few things go in or out of Richmond House without the Post Room team (conveniently-situated in an office just behind reception) knowing about it.

Nearly 100,000 packets a year, for instance, come into the building, and the postage cost of packets going out totals more than £1,000 a month in franked mail, £75 in registered letters and parcels—and another £250 a month in special despatches by Data mail, a system guaranteeing delivery the day after posting. (Harry maintains that a package for Hong Kong posted by 3 p.m. on Monday will be delivered in Hong Kong, without fail, by 9 a.m., U.K. time, on Wednesday).

Harry himself is a Southampton man who once ran his own supermarket, then a sub-Post Office. He joined ACTS in September, 1973 (after a spell in the Cunard Post Room) to set up a courier and postal operation in the then

(please turn to page 10)



Company secretary John Cove, hoping that incessant commuting between Southampton and Fenchurch Street will some day end.



THE GIRLS BEHIND THE TOP MEN. With Pat Joyce (bottom right) secretary to Managing Director Peter Bainbridge, are the other directors' secretaries (left to right), Jacqui Squire (Bill Campbell), Jenny Angel (John Ormiston), Gwen Hunt (David Hamilton), Jenny Fry (Bob Howland) and Chris Holliday (Del Jenkins). Right: Switchboard team Madeleine Field, Tommy Beadle and Sue Allen.





Chris Henry, who marries in October;

E TOP



SOMETHING TO SMILE ABOUT, obviously, in the Purchasing Department—filling invoice clerk Ruby Moore, with purchasing assistants Annette Foskett and June Watts. **LEFT:** Conversation piece between administration Director Bob Howland (centre), and top members of the Personnel team, Peter Hughes (left) and John Berger.



TECHNICAL TEAM in 'conference'—Maintenance and Repair Manager Bernard Parkins (left), with Secretary Ann Gibson and Assistant Manager Ron Bascombe. **Right:** Head Courier Harry Scammell (left) sorting the post with courier Eric Priestley.



MONEY MEN—AND GIRLS. Financial director David Hamilton (right) with Cashier Norman Nichols (third from left) and the Cashiers and Salaries team.

Two Pages of Sport and Fitness

THEY'RE HAVING A SLIM TIME AT BARKING

By Carter Leonard



IT'S A SIGHT FOR DISBELIEVING EYES as Dave Edmonds takes the scales, watched by Ray Munro, Barry Giffin, Peter Gilmore and Bob Hale.

It would be a slight exaggeration to say that Barking is now only a shadow of its former self, but anybody visiting this regional office after an absence of a few months is almost bound to notice that a certain streamlining has been taking place.

If credit (or blame) is to be apportioned for this, it must go to Ray Munro, of EHCL Exports, for he it was who got the bright idea that the girls in the office were beginning to cast eyes of ridicule upon the figures of a number of the too-portly males.

And so the Barking branch of Slimmers Unlimited came into being. When I visited the region, the male slimming team had been in action for five weeks—and appeared proud of its achievements to date.

Ray Munro himself, for instance, had dropped from 12 st 1 lb to 11 st 6 lb. Bob Hale (EHCL Exports) was down from 13.4 to 12.8; Barry Giffin (EHCL Exports) from 11.7 to 11.5; and Ted Parker (Transport Supt.) from 12 stone to 12 stone!

Top management, too, is hitting the weight-reducing trail. Deputy Regional Manager Peter Gilmore, having set himself an ultimate target of 12 st 7 lb, was already down from 14 st 7 lb to 13 st 12 lb.

Public weigh-ins

Pride of the slimming team, however, is Transport Assistant Dave Edmonds, a likely-looking 15 st 10 lb who, having set himself a final target of 13 stones, claimed to be down to 15 st 7 lb after the first five weeks. (The fact that the scales showed a weight of 16 stones on the day of our visit was lightly brushed-off with the excuse 'I did have a hearty breakfast, I must admit!').

There is no question of team members trying to exaggerate their progress. They meet publicly each Monday morning for a 'weighing-in' ceremony, watched by a bevy of girls variously described as admiring, sceptical—or 'giggling'.

If their weight is down, there is no penalty. If it has increased—or even if it is exactly the same as at the previous weigh-in, a fivepenny penalty must be paid.

How are the improvements being achieved? 'Cutting down on the beer' is the widespread explanation, and a reduction in the intake of bread and potatoes is also helping.

Girls in the office would appear to be suitably impressed. For instance, Christine Cordery, who is secretary to the Regional Manager, works in the next office to Peter Gilmore and sees him anything up to thirty times a day. I asked her if she was impressed by the change in him. 'To be honest, I haven't noticed any', she said.

It's a hard life, chaps, isn't it?

The Robin Hood Family are still champs

Scotland's family of 'Robin Hoods'—the Macphersons, led by the redoubtable Margaret (though don't tell husband David)—still go from strength to strength.

Towards the end of last year, Margaret—secretary to Coatbridge Regional Manager Norman Niblock—became Scottish Lady Champion of 1978, and with her husband, son Leslie and another club archer won both the Scottish indoor and outdoor championships for '78. Leslie is Scottish junior champion and was third in the Senior Gents Championship.

In May this year, Margaret (only woman in Scotland to attain Master Bowman last year) will be competing in the international trials for a place in the British team to go to Moscow for the World Games. Leslie already has a place in the National Youth Squad for the Olympics.

The Macphersons look forward hopefully to

1982, when archery will be included in the Commonwealth Games for the first time.

Dancing Ann

Other news from across the Border: Eighteen-year-old Ann Martin, who gives her favourite hobby as dancing, has joined Coatbridge ACTS as a copy typist;

Accounts Clerk Catherine Thompson was married last November to Alec Hughes;

Wilma McLaren, wife of Assistant Transport Superintendent Alec has had a son, David; and

Angela Anderson, wife of Commercial Assistant David, has also had a son, Christopher.



The Barking five-a-side team that can't put a football foot wrong.

This gift horse is a winner!

The old saying that you shouldn't look a gift horse in the mouth has certainly come true for me (writes Wendy Lilly, Basildon Telex operator).

When I looked in mine, I found she was an 18-month-old brown thoroughbred mare with a small white star on her forehead, as thin as a rake and very nervous.

I had been helping a friend for some time to muck out her stables and so on, when she told me out of the blue one day that the mare Yo Te Quoro was to be mine.

Now aged five, Quere (as I call her) is worth her weight in gold to me. As a team, we have won 50 rosettes in two seasons, two trophies and a gold medallion, so I certainly cannot complain.

Quere tries hard when in the mood, but like most women is somewhat unpredictable. So far we have competed together in side-saddle, working hunter, dressage and show class events; now we're going to try show jumping.

Who knows, we may yet make the Horse of the Year Show. With a horse like Quere, you can't set your sights too high.



Wendy Lilly and gift horse Quere.

Welcome, Tristan

Congratulations to Charmaine Coaker, Telex Operator at the Terminal, and husband Max on the birth of a son, Tristan Moss.

★ ★ ★

The Terminal's annual staff party—at the Silhouette Club—was voted a big success by all.

TOP 5 ASK 'WHO CAN BEAT US?'

The slimming craze reported on the opposite page is, of course, only symptomatic of the Keep Fit boom that has had Barking in its grip recently. Pretty well everybody is becoming involved in it, with weekly badminton and squash lessons as part of the staple diet.

The Region's Five-a-Side team is also making a name for itself. Spearheaded by Ron Clarke, of Imports, the team plays two games every Sunday in the Wanstead Five-a-Side League, and with ten games played was top of the League and without a single defeat.

Top goal-scorer at that stage was Ron Clarke himself, with lots of credit due also to Ian Wallace (Imports), Peter Tapson (Exports), Barry Giffin (Exports), Bob Hale (Exports) and Gary Hockley (Imports).

Incidentally, if any other region—or, indeed, any other firm—would like a game against the Barking 'champs', Ron Clarke is the man to contact.

New Year revellers beat 5ft snow

Party-goers had to plough through snow drifts five feet high to get to the annual New Year disco organised by Tilbury Terminal.

The fact that so many got through showed how determined they were to have a good time despite everything. Many thanks to organisers Norm, Kev, Glynn and Les.

★ ★ ★

Welcome back to Shirley Hopperton, again on the Tilbury switchboard after a spell in hospital and convalescence.

And a warm welcome to the Tilbury team for Rhonda Soden, whose name reveals her Welsh background.

Steve shivers (and bikes) his way to charity win



Steve King (pictured left), commercial assistant at Southampton Terminal, was one of eleven cyclists who met at The Old House at Home public house, Romsey, at crack of dawn on the coldest November day for 12 years, to take part in a sponsored run for Soton branch of the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

And not only did he take part—he was first home, too!

Two vans and three support cars took bikes and riders on a 77-mile journey to Long Hamborough, North of Oxford, and it was 7.30 a.m. when the cyclists began the long sponsored ride home.

'It did not take long for everybody to get into their own rhythms and very soon we were miles apart', says Steve.

"As Romsey got closer, the hills seemed to get longer and longer, with fewer downhill stretches on which to relax.

"However, at one p.m. the first cyclist—ME—arrived back at the pub, a steady flow of stragglers coming in at intervals over the next four hours".

Aches and pains were soon forgotten when the news was given that £500 had been raised by the ride.

Steve would like to hear from anybody who wants to buy a bicycle!

★ ★ ★

Southampton Terminal welcomes Clive Francis—table tennis, sailing and beer and winemaking are his hobbies—who has joined as a Control Clerk.

Robin takes over GEORGE, THE DOCUMENT 'KING', RETIRES

A man who played a key role in setting up the EHCL container service to South Africa is the new Commercial Manager of ACTS.

Robin Galloway first joined the company eight years ago as Assistant Operations Manager, Cargo and Depots. He now succeeds George Houldin, who had been Commercial Manager for four years until his retirement at the end of February. Before that he was Deputy Regional Manager at Manchester.

George had a long career in shipping — seven years in the Merchant Navy, followed by 26 ashore in the shipping business.

At a farewell gathering for him, Del Jenkins, a director of ACTS and head of the company's Management Services, said few people knew as much about shipping documentation.

After a morticing attachment had been presented to him as a gift from colleagues, George, a skilled maker of furniture explained to his suitably-bewildered colleagues that it would enable him 'to fit arms to the legs of chairs'!



Robin Galloway

Served at sea

Robin Galloway comes to us from Ellerman and Bucknall, EHCL agents in Cape Town, where, as Operations Manager, he helped to establish depot facilities and charges in the three main South African ports of Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth, and, inland, at Johannesburg.

He held a watching brief over the building of South African terminals, and acted as liaison in discussions covering the setting-up of services to be provided by the South African Railway and Harbour Authorities.

Like his predecessor, Robin has wide experience of time at sea and in management. He served at sea with Ben Line.



Del Jenkins (left) and George Houldin at George's farewell.

James Chapman's heart is in Maintenance while at the office, but at home gardening claims much of his time. His big regret—the demise of the Head Office gardening society.



How Harry spent sixpence as his wife was born

(continued from page 6)

spanking new Richmond House.

He and wife Dorothy have four children and six grandchildren, and Harry must be one of the few men who can remember his wife being born!

'Her family lived within a stone's throw of our house', he says, "and I vividly recall the day Dorothy was born because it was the first time I had been to the pictures on a Saturday afternoon! Her mother gave me sixpence to keep me out of the way while my own mother looked after her while she had her baby'.

Sixpence vanished

Not only does Harry remember the day; he also remembers how he spent the sixpence. Twopence to get into the pictures; twopence for a bar of chocolate; a penny for broken rock; and a penny for four liquorice slices. Happy days!

'New boys' to the Post Room team, Buck Ryan and Eric Priestley, who both joined late last year, have a proud sporting record between them. Buck, married with a son who is headmaster of a Suffolk school, is Chairman of Southampton Amateur Boxing Club and a qualified amateur referee and judge. Eric, married with one son and two grandchildren, has the unique distinction of being a Knight of the Green. His bowling club in Southampton he says, has the oldest green in the world, and in his first year as a member, he won the club's 200th anniversary competition to earn his Knighthood.

The team is augmented at present by 'young' Frank Houghton, 'helping out' as a temp following his retirement last August.

Bulk buying

PEOPLE, FOR INSTANCE, LIKE June Watts, Annette Foskett and Ruby Moore, who together run a small department known as Purchasing and Archives. June and Annette are the purchasers, and Ruby, married to consulting engineer Ken and with two daughters and a son, keeps a watchful eye on the files other people think they will never want again—and often do.

June and Annette buy in bulk in an effort to keep pace with the needs not only of Head Office but also of ACTS regional offices. (You

would hardly credit the number of envelopes, pens, paper clips and rolls of Selotape people can get through each year!).

Nor is stationery the only purchasing responsibility for June and Annette. Furniture and soft furnishings are also on their shopping list. Among their most unusual buys so far—swivel bar stools for Data Control. (So that's what they're doing up there).



Joan Shergold
secretary to Services
manager Dudley Kirk



Frank Houghton
courier who couldn't
give up!

Annette Foskett—whose away-from-the-office hobbies include camping and sailing—is one of the original Soton ACTS team which commuted daily for five weeks to and from Fenchurch Street to 'learn the ropes'. She and husband Arthur have two sons and two daughters.

June Watts, whose husband Michael is a scaffolder in the shipyards, is no newcomer to purchasing. Before joining ACTS four and a half

And here is the news from Birmingham

SAME DAY WEDDINGS FOR IAN AND LYNN

Wedding bells at Sutton Coldfield recently for two of ACTS Birmingham staff.

Telex operator Lynn Beesley and cargo clerk Ian Wallis chose the same day for their marriages, respectively, to Colin Wood and Lynn Kitler.

Lynn Beesley and Colin (showing a leg in the picture on the right) were married at All Saints Church, Four Oaks, and Ian and Lynn Kitler at All Saints, Streetly.

★ ★ ★

Graham Plimmer has joined Birmingham Cargo Department as cargo

clerk. If the name sounds familiar, it's probably because father is Birmingham's Deputy Transport Superintendent.

Graham plays for Warwickshire County Colts at cricket.

His other hobbies include music and dancing (Travolta style). He wants it to be known (Heaven knows why) that his appetite is nothing like his father's!





Technical director John Ormiston (right) with members of his technical team.

Printer is Glamour Grannie

years ago, she was purchasing assistant in a ship's stores at the docks. She has a 15-year-old daughter.

PEOPLE, FOR INSTANCE, LIKE chief cashier Norman Nichols—the man who, among other things, pays out something like £30 million a year to the company's suppliers.

Norman was one of the nucleus of ACTS 'originals' who left the original ACTS headquarters in London to help set up the new headquarters in Richmond House.

Apart from Customs Duty and smaller items paid out of petty cash, Norman's department not only collects all monies from shippers but pays out all monies owed by ACTS.

Computer help

With more than a little help from the computer and the Midland Bank, the Salaries staff handles payments to the company's 750 employees nationwide every month. How can those 750 ensure that the right money reaches them at the right time and in the right place? By ensuring that the Salaries department is kept up-to-date with information.

"Most common human failings are failure to notify change of address, change of bank account or change of marital status", says Norman. You have been warned!

Norman, a keen gardener, stamp collector and coins collector in his spare time—has now been nearly 11 years with the company, and he and his wife Jean have two daughters, aged 14 and 11.

PEOPLE, FOR INSTANCE, LIKE Hilda Stokes—a sure-fire candidate for the title of Head Office's most glamorous grandmother—who glows with pride as she shows you her brand new AM 2852 Automatic Offset Duplicator. Hilda used to be in purchasing, but six months ago took over the 7th Floor print-room.

Silver wedding

She admits that, as a printer, she started from scratch at Richmond House, but if enthusiasm and love of the job count for anything, she'll soon fulfil her promise (to herself) to be 'as good as the professional printer down the road'. Even now, the various papers and forms she turns out for CAMEL, EHCL, BEN LINE, ACTA and ACTS roll off her new duplicator at a rate of anything between 5,000 and 10,000 an hour.

Hilda and husband John, who celebrated their silver wedding on Boxing Day, have two married daughters and two sons, one in the RAF. Hilda became a grandmother at 49.

PEOPLE, FOR INSTANCE, LIKE Dawn Dalziel-Jones, Central Services Supervisor, who watches from her seventh floor desk over a bevy of good-looking (see Page 6 picture) young ladies in the typing pool, and whose responsibilities also cover printing, the ground floor reception and telephone desk plus the Telex room on the 7th Floor.

Dawn, who has been working for 26 years and was once herself in a typing pool, says: "Never, anywhere, have I seen such a variety of work to be typed. Forms, facts and figures of every kind,

in addition to the normal correspondence.

I invited Dawn to stick out her neck and list what she considers the three most important pointers for those using the services of a typing pool?

'Firstly, write clearly so that the typist does not have to waste hours analysing words or going back to check with the originator,' she said. 'Secondly, give clear and concise instructions about how you want a job done.

Think first

And thirdly, spare a little thought BEFORE you hand the job over, instead of making corrections afterwards so that the whole job has to be done again'.

Dawn has three children—two daughters, aged 20 and 18, and a son of 12.

PEOPLE, FOR INSTANCE, LIKE Tommy (Thomasina) Beadle, Madeleine Field and Sue Allen—who between them, in reception, give an all-day welcome to visitors, man an almost non-stop switchboard and are generally responsible for office security.

Sue, originally with ACL, but at Richmond House since operations began, has been married seven years and was a member of the ACTS team of six which took part in a sponsored swim last November for the British Heart Foundation.

The TV budge

Madeleine, who has been manning switchboards all her working life, joined the company three years ago. Her pride and joy is a budgerigar which she says, never lives in its cage. 'When I leave home in the morning', she explains, 'it just sits on the bar under the television set, rests its head and goes to sleep. If it wakes up, it has a music box which it knows how to switch on and off'.

Newest member of the Reception team is Tommy, who joined last October from the Operations Room at Police Headquarters. She is married with one son, aged 25, and a red setter called Rusty. 'Don't forget him', she said.

I didn't...



HILDA'S NEW PRIDE AND JOY

CHEERFUL grandmother Hilda Stokes with her new automatic offset. Hilda's avowed aim—'to become as good as the printer down the road—and even better'. BELOW: The Operations Department staff, on the third floor, takes time off to get into the picture.



THOSE INCREDIBLE 'TWINS' KEEP IT UP!

It had to happen, of course. Remember the story we published in our last issue about Loraine Evers (formerly of Head Office Personnel) and Lorraine Barry (formerly of Administration), who lived near each other as children, went to the same school in the same class, both worked for ACTS, were married at the same Church, chose identical wedding dresses—and left the company almost at the same time and for the same reason (to have a baby)?

Now they've had their babies—and THEY'RE BOTH BOYS! Of course.

Well done, the two Lor(r)aines. Junior Evers has been christened Paul Stephens, and Junior Barry is named Lee.

How the Siren first got blowing

By Ray Tomlin

Assistant Container and Equipment Inspector,
Southampton Terminal

I've often wondered how the Beatles got started. Or the Rolling Stones. Or Abba. Surely none had anything like the traumatic birth of The Siren.

I remember the day well. Four of us were talking at the Eling Sailing Club. Dave Curtis, Eddy Ford, John Monks and myself.

"What we need is something new", said one of us who shall be nameless (to protect the innocent). "How about a pop group?", asked the same person, which made for a pretty one-sided conversation and went to show what comes from staring too long at oneself in the mirror.

"Can you play the guitar, Dave?" Nope!

"Can you play, Eddy?" Nope!

"Can you sing, John?" Nope!

With this kind of overwhelming encouragement, The Siren was born.

The first practice was arranged. Dave Curtis, I remember, had a folk guitar. I had a bass guitar which I endeavoured to play upside down because I am left-handed. Eddy Ford had a borrowed, full-blown electric guitar which was impossible to tune and sounded shocking.

Last, but not least, John Monks was there, intended to be the singer.

Everybody plugged into a tiny six watt amplifier and the first music (for want of a better word) came forth. To be quite frank, it was dreadful, but everybody cried: "Great".

Debut—they call it!

Our first public performance—our international debut, we called it to ourselves—was at the Sailing Club Adults' Party just before Christmas.

We did three numbers, and honesty forbids that I describe our reception as anything but warm. With the applause still ringing in our ears (it's amazing what a little encouragement does for you) practice was attacked in a way that only those who have been 'warmly received' would understand.

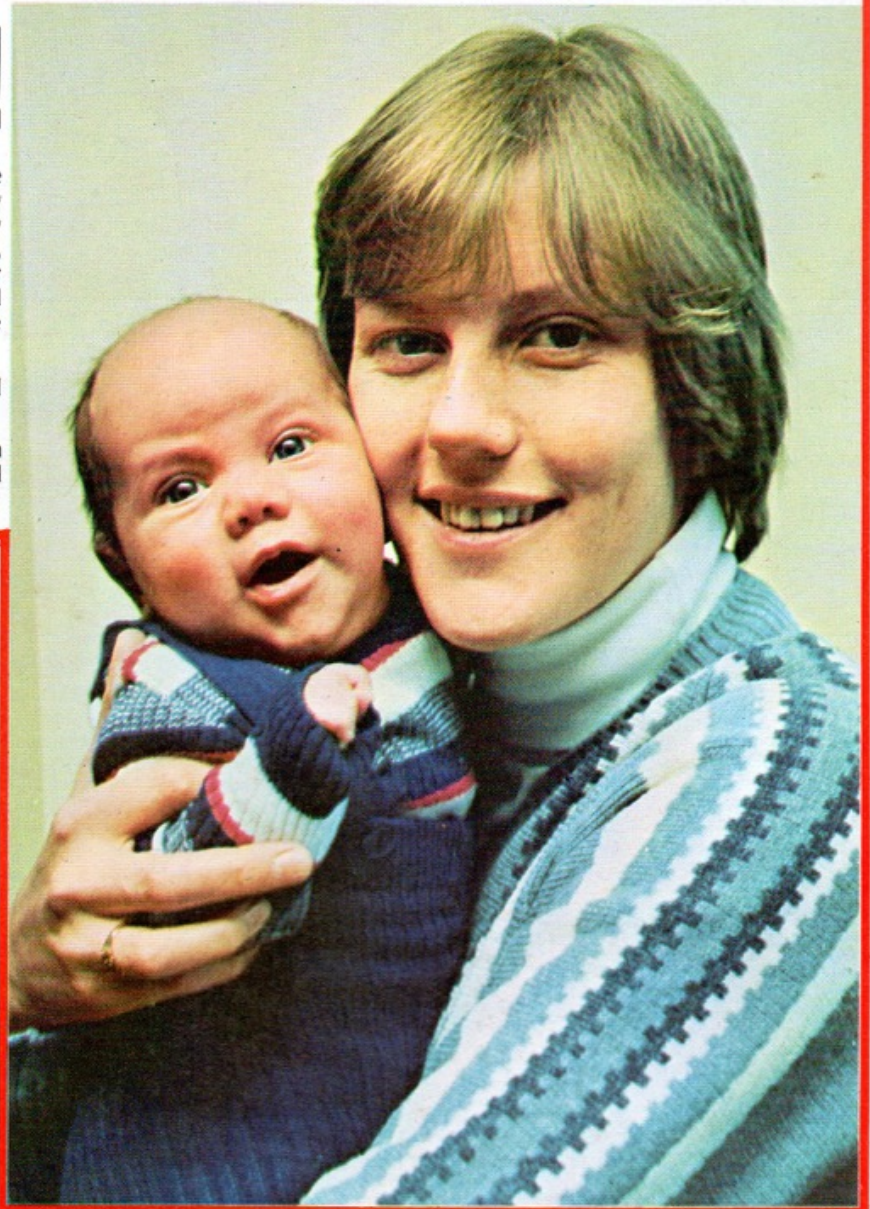
We were so overcome by it all that we decided that what the group really required now was a drummer. "My brother-in-law might be interested" John said. And that's how Ian Haddon, another unsuspecting member of the public, got himself lumbered.

Since those early days, The Siren has progressed even beyond its own wildest dreams. Today its equipment is worth more than £1,000. A charity concert is the next engagement on the list, and a studio session is arranged.

So keep your fingers crossed for us. PLEASE.



The Siren—in full flight.



Paul scoops pool at first attempt

Paul Roberts, of Manchester ACTS, is a chap who times things just right. He joined Wilmslow British Legion Angling Club just two days before the club's annual competition—and then romped home with two first prizes.



He won a cup for 'the heaviest fish out of two competitions'—although he only entered one—and a shield for the heaviest total catch at his first attempt.

It could be said that North-West sales scooped the pool again!

Meet Barney Bear

In the midst of the winter snows and other problems, Birmingham office produced a new cartoonist (whose initials are KE) and a new cartoon character, Barney Bear. KE hopes to produce a sketch for most issues of 'Contacts'. This one bears the caption: "The route looks plain sailing, but it never is".

