

was removed.

For three or four years Arthur acted as office boy and letter-copying was one of his duties, both at the Mustard Mill and later at the Tin Works. Charles Manners had a typewriter, which he and Arthur used for correspondence, but as the workload increased a full-time typist, Miss King, was engaged and a replacement office boy was appointed.

As the years passed Arthur rose to become Company Secretary. He presided over his open office, christened the 'Counting House,' at a high desk from which he kept everyone under surveillance. Despite his being a strong disciplinarian he was a kind-hearted and benevolent person and everyone held him in high regard.

Mr Trethowan, who eventually became head of the Lithographic Artists' Department, joined the firm in 1891 and in his early days he shared a tiny room, accessed by a spiral staircase, with Mr Lamb and Mr Moses. The former was the first lettering artist and the latter the first lithographic artist and designer. Space was at a premium in the minute office, which was completely filled by its three occupants.

The inspirational Charles Fletcher began working for the company in 1906, aged fourteen. He was an apprentice artist, who would later become a commercial artist of international renown. A lifelong bachelor, he attended Mansfield College of Art, which, at that time was situated at the bottom of Chesterfield Road. In later life Charles frequently recalled the years of the First World War when the factory was committed to producing components for the war effort. These included mess tins, ammunition and shell cases, gas mask components and biscuit tins.

At that time of war, Charles recollected, the factory girls often brought their knitting to work, for many of them were knitting socks for the troops engaged in the French campaign. At meal times out would come the wool and knitting needles and the girls would knit furiously.

It should be remembered that many male employees were called to the colours and a considerable number did not return. William Holmes Reddan, on the occasion of the laying of the stone for the factory extension, in 1919, made

a moving reference to their loss.

Charles Fletcher became a craftsman in his own right. At that time artists were employed by Barringer Wallis and Manners on a contract, or commission basis, but the designs, in many cases, were the copyright of the company. However, Charles will be most remembered for his design of the 'Quality Street' range of containers. He earned the nickname, 'Mr Quality Street' and his designs were so successful they are still with us today.

Soon after the First World War Charles became interested in travel, particularly on the railways. He lived in Bishop Street, Mansfield, that was very close to the London Midland and Scottish Railway station, in fact the station-master lived in a house at the bottom of the street. Charles nicknamed him 'Turnip' on account of his short stature and bald head. At that time a train left Mansfield station every four minutes, making it busier than St. Pancras! Charles had many tales to tell about this era of steam and his excursions by rail.

Very interested in music and the arts, Charles was also a good billiards and snooker player and he loved cricket. As a season ticket holder of Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club he spent much time at the Trent Bridge ground.

Cyril Mallatrat, an artist who specialised in Elizabethan, Edwardian, and Victorian designs, including portraits, was a rival to Charles. Both artists had their own studios in the Artists' Department, which reflected their seniority and they visited the Victoria and Albert Museum regularly and also other similar establishments both at home and abroad. These offered the opportunity to discover material for use in their designs.

Two other artists were commissioned during this period, namely G. Willis and T. H. Collins.

1924 to 1939

A good proportion of the management of Barringer Wallis and Manners, up until the time of the Second World War, were Quakers and it is interesting to note that so were most of the factory owners in the tin box industry in the North of

tree that stood near the main entrance to the factory. It was quite a landmark, which unfortunately is no longer there.

Two notable engineers left the company in the early nineteen-thirties, namely John Boneham and Albert Whiteley. Both became involved with well-known Mansfield firms that are still in business to this day. John Boneham became a partner in Boneham and Turners, Precision Engineers and Albert Whiteley began the Whiteley Radio Company. 'Whiteley's,' as it is known, later opened a cabinet works on Church Lane, Mansfield, which was eventually closed in order to concentrate on the electrical side of the business.

### 1939 to 1945

This period, which covers the Second World War years was a time of munitions work, air raids and food rationing. In 1939 Barringer Wallis and Manners became part of the Metal Box Company and the two factories were largely devoted to the manufacture of components to help in the war effort. These consisted of munitions components, respirators, mess tins and emergency ration containers. At Oddicroft Lane a section of the factory was run by B.S.A. (British Small Arms Company) whose personnel were employed on the manufacture of gun parts and jig tooling. This concentration on 'war work' meant that the absorption into the Metal Box Company had little impact on the day to day running of the factories.

It should be stressed that, despite the concentration on essential munitions work, many employees were drafted into the services and others were on deferment. Sadly, some of those who were called up failed to return, such as Len Hopkinson and Dick Brewin, both of whom had worked in the offices. Doubtless there were others who were equally unfortunate. I too served in the armed forces and would be gratified to see their names recorded in a roll of honour sited within the factory. (Lest we forget).

Many factory personnel were called upon to do their bit in Civil Defence. The Home Guard battalion was brought into line by ex-sergeant major Charlie Kilminster, who was

the Factory Commissioner at that time. A splendid uniformed figure, he was equally impressive on the parade ground, (the tennis court was commandeered for this purpose) with a commanding voice that could be heard as far away as Mansfield Market Place.

Fire-watching and plane-spotting were taken very seriously. For daytime purposes a concrete bunker was constructed on the rocks overlooking the Rock Valley Works and watch was maintained by Len Tooke and Captain Parker, whose contracts had been terminated by the Artists' Department, due to wartime restrictions. Night patrols were carried out by a small squad of male employees, who covered the factory sites in pairs. They were each armed with a rifle and two rounds of ammunition, with which to shoot on sight any German intruders! None were ever encountered and the only time a bullet was fired was when Norman Naggington let off a round accidentally in the section of the Toy Factory that was used as their sleeping quarters. One can imagine that a few choice words were uttered at the incident!

However, the much-appreciated reward for a night's duty was a huge breakfast comprising the luxury of eggs and bacon, served by the Canteen Manageress. Each man would eat as much as possible, bearing in mind the meal was equivalent to a family's ration for a week!

Bill Saxton was one of the employees who witnessed the concentration on 'war work.' He began his employment with Barringer Wallis and Manners some years earlier as an engineer and he gave many years of loyal service. Prior to the war period he had taken charge of the I.B.U. Department and he ran the production side of the Rock Valley factory for the duration of the war. On many occasions he worked until 10pm and, on Fridays he paid the wages to the production staff. In later years Bill acquired the nickname of 'Bulging Bill,' which arose from his work on a process invented by Seth Fortune and Arthur Dove, at the Oddicroft Lane factory. It consisted of bulging round containers into a barrel shape using centrifugal force. A prototype machine was built for the purpose and when it went into production it was Bill who set it up and

maintained it. Bill's nickname became so widely known that a rack in the Tool Store, dedicated to tools used in the bulging operation, was identified with the name 'Bulging Bill!'

A person who deserves special recognition for his efforts during the troubled times of the Second World War is Bill Naylor, a member of the office staff. He kept in touch with the employees who were serving in the armed forces and he edited a Forces Newsletter, which was issued to them and provided news from home. There may well be some of these Newsletters still in existence.

1945 to 1983

The end of the Second World War brought considerable change to the company. The Head Office of the Metal Box Company appointed a General Manager to take control of the Mansfield and Sutton-in-Ashfield sites. This appointment brought Kenneth McLean to Mansfield, who it is believed, worked for Gray Dunn's of Glasgow prior to joining the Metal Box Company. Although new to tin box making, he had the personality, drive and flair ideally suited to the Barringer Wallis and Manners philosophy.

The management team under Kenneth McLean at this time is believed to be as follows:

Factory Manager, Mansfield	- D.B.Huffam
Works Manager, Mansfield	- G.F.Gledhill
Branch Commercial Manager	- L.G.Wass
Branch Buying Manager	- S.Bills
Branch Quality Controller	- B.Reynolds
Branch Production Controller	- R.Mitchell
Branch Personnel Officer	- A. Wilson
Branch Chief Engineer	- W.H.Beadsmore
Factory Manager, Sutton-in-Ashfield	- W.Ormston
Works Manager, Sutton-in-Ashfield	- W.H.Walker

Kenneth McLean had created new positions, such as Production Controller, Quality Controller and Personnel Officer. Many of the above were existing employees and the General Manager's faith in them ensured their whole-

## JOYCE BRYAN'S WARTIME MEMORIES OF THE METAL BOX COMPANY (FORMERLY BARRINGER WALLIS AND MANNERS)

(Reproduced by kind permission of the Old Mansfield Society from their publication *Mansfield in World War II*)

I joined the company in 1942 as a teenager doing respirators for gas masks... also mess tins ... and bomb tails. It was shift work, but I was unable to go on nights because I wasn't old enough. You had to be eighteen to go on nights. So, that put me out of nights. I just did days and afternoons. The morning shift was six am till two pm and the afternoon shift was two till ten pm. Hand presses were used at this time. Power presses came later on. Passes were needed to enter the works gates and you had to carry your gas mask with you for which the firm provided a carrying tin. In addition to the gas masks and mess tins in the early period of the war they were also contracted to make the Boyes Anti-tank Rifle, a one-man weapon which fired an armour-piercing half-inch round shell. During the invasion scares of 1940 and 1941 they were standard issue for units on anti-invasion duties and for the RAF Regiment. Later on the company made the Very pistol and the Sten machine carbine.

Another aspect of the war effort was the raising of money for War Bonds. The schemes were to raise £5000, the notional cost of a Spitfire aircraft. The Metal Box group set up one of these schemes and all member companies of the group participated. By May 1941 an aircraft had been bought - Spitfire Mk2b, serial P8389, carrying the name 'Metabox'. It survived the war, being scrapped in 1947.

Appendix 9