

# The Plug 'n Pipe

C A Sothers

Quarterly Newsletter  
June 2007  
Editor – Steve Craddock

## Welcome to the second edition of the Company's Newsletter!

*The last couple of months have been overshadowed by the passing away of a great friend and colleague. Many of you will have known John Dawson for some considerable time and will remember his wit and wisdom and insatiable appetite for biscuits and sandwiches!! Robert Hinton has penned a short tribute to John which is featured later in the newsletter.*

*I will start as I did in the last edition with an update on the company. Since February we have won around £6 million worth of orders. These include: -*

*Phase 2 at Haybridge High School, Hagley  
A new Esporta Health and Racquets Club in Gloucester*

*Further work at Network Rail, Coventry  
A new laboratory facility at Warwick University*

*6 x Goals Soccer Centres including a high profile development in Regents Park, London*

*A new Cinema in Hull*

*Two new schools in Telford*

*We continue to receive a high level of quality enquiries but we are still operating in a very competitive market place.*

## The 2012 Olympics



An interesting postscript to my article in the previous newsletter was that Tessa Jowell announced to a stunned House of Commons that the projected costs for the Olympics have now risen from the original estimate of £2.4 billion to £9.4 billion!

## Smoke Free England – At last!!



England finally catches up with the rest of the UK on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2007 when smoking in public places becomes a criminal offence. Fines of up to £200 can be imposed on individuals and up to £2500 on companies that defy the ban.

This will have little impact at the office in Hockley as we already operate a non-smoking policy in the building. However the law classifies company vehicles as a "workplace" and as such, from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2007, smoking will not be allowed in company vehicles.

There has been much debate about private cars being subject to the same law. If the business mileage exceeds the private mileage then it may be subject to a smoking ban. If the vehicle is used primarily for private purposes then it is not covered by the smoking ban. Please bear in mind that business purposes includes getting to and from sites.

The smoking ban will also extend to site offices and secure stores.

# "Crash for Cash"



Investors in People (IIP) **INVESTORS IN PEOPLE**

A warning has been issued by our insurance company that there are an increasing number of gangs operating in the Midlands who are organising accidents in a "Cash for Crash" scam. For each successful scam they can net up to £30,000 in personal injury claims, vehicle repairs and hire charges. They have provided a list of "tell-tale signs" that you should look out for if you are involved in an accident:-

- The driver in front brakes for no good reason - often at a roundabout.
- The car you run into is full of passengers
- The driver already has insurance and personal details written on a piece of paper
- The accident is caused by a decoy vehicle pulling out or creating a hazard.

Their advice in these circumstances is to record as much detail as possible at the scene of the accident. If possible take photographs of the car, the drivers and any passengers. Report any suspicions to the Police and the insurance company.

We will be supplying an Accident Management kit, which includes a disposable camera, to all company drivers in the next couple of months. In light of the advice from our insurers we are extending this free of charge to all company employees.

*To contribute to the newsletter with ideas and suggestions ring me at the office on 0121 507 2044 or email [steve.craddock@sothers.com](mailto:steve.craddock@sothers.com)*

We are making good progress with the implementation of IIP. Over 50% of all the reviews have taken place and the rest are scheduled over the next few weeks. The feedback from the reviews has been very positive and we will be reviewing the training requirements shortly.

As a reminder - we have established 4 business objectives for the company this year

1. To be the best "one-stop-shop" for M&E design, installation and maintenance services.
2. To satisfy our clients!!
3. To make a profit and provide a sound financial platform for future business.
4. To conduct ourselves and our business honestly and with integrity.

## COMPANY NEWS

Four employees have become Dads over the last few months!

Matt Bamber had a little girl Taylor Mai on 26<sup>th</sup> March.

Adam Glendall had a little boy Aaron Ellis on 18<sup>th</sup> April.

Jonathon Wigley had a little boy Jamie Lee on 20<sup>th</sup> April.

Carl Wragg had a little girl Lauren on 3<sup>rd</sup> May.

Many congratulations to them and their partners.

## Tribute to John Dawson

31<sup>st</sup> January 1944 – 27<sup>th</sup> April 2007

By Robert Hinton



John and Ann Dawson

It was with great sadness that I heard that John had lost his fight against cancer. John worked for the company for 47 years and was employed by my father Brian Hinton. He started work as an apprentice, cycling to work from Sutton Coldfield, and then moved into the office after qualifying as an electrician. He had a good eye for detail and he soon became an accomplished project engineer. Indeed, when I joined the company over 30 years ago, I was John's assistant and he taught me a great deal about project management and the benefit of thorough preparation and planning. He became a director in 1978 and made a substantial contribution to the growth and success of C A Sothers Ltd over the next 29 years. After he retired from the board of directors he took on a new role as the Safety Manager. He developed the existing procedures and stamped his mark on the role and in 2006 we won the Safety award from Miller Construction. This was in no small part due to John's contribution.

John had an influence on so many of his colleagues during his 47 years with the company and like so many of you I find it difficult to accept that JD will not be with us any more.

One of his major talents was his timing. He knew when to offer assistance and, just as importantly, he knew when to leave you to sort things out on

your own. His sense of timing was also impeccable when he arrived on site just as breakfast was being served!

Throughout his career John earned the respect of those who worked with him. This was evidenced by the number of people that attended his funeral, and showed their support to his wife Ann and his two sons Stephen and Philip.

We have to move on and learn to live without John being there. This will not be easy but we all have fond memories of a man that did so much to help us, and the company we work for.

*Letter received from Ann Dawson:-*

*To all John's friends and colleagues at C A Sothers*

*I should like to thank you all for your wonderful letters, cards, flowers, donations and general heartfelt condolences following the death of my dear John. He was a larger than life character with a very tender, kind heart and his loss leaves a huge void in all our lives. On occasions, his 'bark was definitely worse than his bite', as many of you will have experienced, but he would always lend a sympathetic ear and offer help and advice when it was requested. He was a very private man and when diagnosed with Cancer, he had to deal with it in his own way.*

*C A Sothers was very much a part of his life and he was always interested and concerned for the welfare of everyone involved with the company. Even though he had taken on a new role in the last three years, he still felt very much a part of things. He had a great rapport with people from the Site to the Boardroom and his humour always carried him through. Even those "terrible" jokes!*

*He would have been overwhelmed with the very genuine affection and grief expressed by so many people who knew him, and it was a great comfort to my family and me that he was held in such high esteem. But essentially, to me, he was a generous, loving Husband, Father and Grandpa, who is missed so very much.*

*Many thanks,*

*Ann Dawson*

## Blast from the past!

Well I have finally tracked down a photograph of the man that started the company. Charles Arthur Sothers (born in 1900) was just 19 when he set up his own business doing electrical repairs and rewinding motors. The company was incorporated in 1926 and the mathematicians amongst you will have worked out that we celebrated our 80<sup>th</sup> birthday last year.



*Charlie Sothers and a young man that many of you should be able to recognise!*

Charlie's timing was very good as industry in Birmingham and the Black Country expanded and became more dependant on electrical services to drive machines in the factories. As well as the electrical contracting business the company also repaired electric motors and had a shop on Hockley Hill that sold and repaired electrical appliances.

Charlie was a devoted family man and had 4 children, 2 sons and 2 daughters.

In addition to his family and his electrical business the other love of his life was the game of golf. An all year round golfer, even the Second World War and petrol rationing did not stop Charlie as he would cycle to the golf course with his golf bag on his back. He was a member of Sutton Coldfield Golf Club, where The Sothers Cup is still played every year in memory of Charlie. He was also one of the founders of The Wanderers Golf Club, which is now in its 62<sup>nd</sup> year.

Tragically in 1969 Charlie died when his car was involved in a road traffic accident ½ a mile from his home in Little Aston.

Charlie would be very proud if he knew that the company he started is still successful more than 80 years later.

## Appointments

Cassy Sheppard has joined the company as the Health, Safety and Training Officer.



She is taking over the H&S role from John Dawson and she will also be taking responsibility for the Apprentices and their training. Cassy joins us after 18 years at William Sapcote & Sons Ltd. Cassy lives in Streetly with her partner Ken.



Chrissie Burrell and Kataryna Janiec have also joined recently. Chrissie is looking after the switchboard and reception duties and Kataryna is working for Christina on contract administration.

Last, but not least, is Peter Madican. Peter is an Electrical services quantity surveyor and will be working alongside Paul Mundy to provide support to the project engineers.



His career started as an apprentice electrician and he progressed to quantity surveying having gained experience in a variety of types of installation work. Peter has a number of hobbies including breeding and showing Roller Canaries.