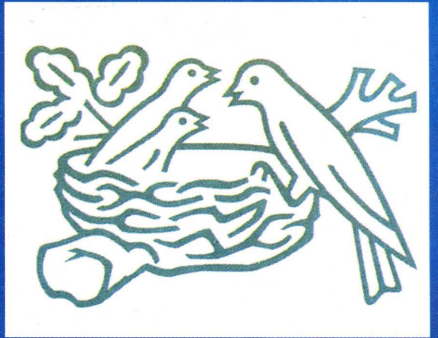


A CENTURY OF Nestlé AT STAVERTON

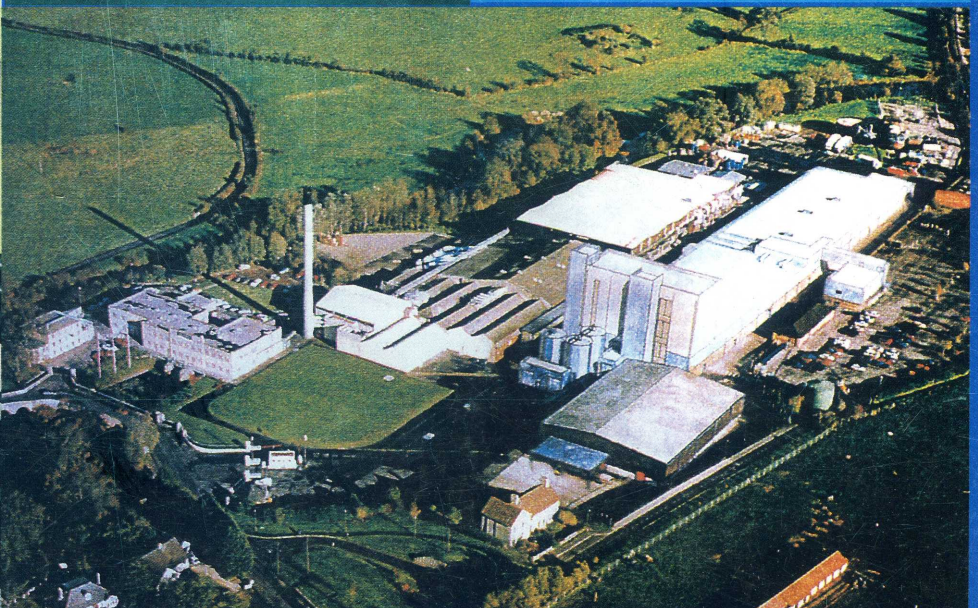
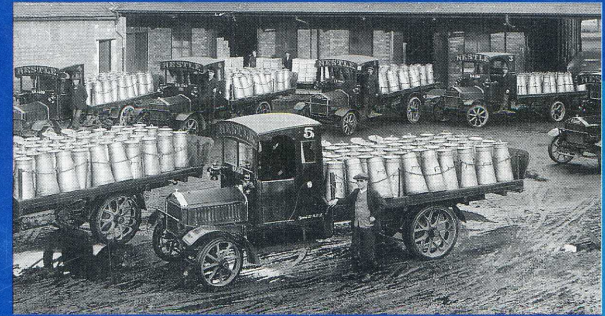
1897 - 1997



chambourcy
REGD.

MILKMAID
SWEETENED CONDENSED MILK

CONDENSED FULL CREAM MILK
SWEETENED.
THIS TIN CONTAINS THE EQUIVALENT OF ONE AND THREE-QUARTERS (1 3/4) PINTS OF MILK WITH SUGAR ADDED.



A JOURNEY THROUGH THE STAVERTON FACTORY ARCHIVES
WRITTEN BY PETE LAVIS

Introduction

The Nestle Company, now the largest food company in the world, has retained an important presence in the village of Staverton for the last 100 years. Their arrival on the edge of the tiny Wiltshire community at the end of the 19th century was keenly welcomed by a beleaguered population who had been struggling to survive since the village cloth factory had closed down in 1891. Most of the community had been employed in the cloth trade and the closure of the mill had created a high level of local unemployment and hardship to village families who had relied on it to provide essential work. Many Staverton families were forced to move away from the village to seek other employment and the Parish population dropped dramatically in the last decade of the 19th century.

Hopes that a new cloth business would take over the mill were soon eroded as the premises remained empty so it was with great relief that the locals learned of Anglo-Swiss's purchase of the site in 1897. Staverton families looked forward to the opportunity of gaining new employment and most prayed that the new milk processing business would, at long last, provide a much stabler and permanent industry in their village which had suffered the traumas of the unpredictable and unreliable cloth manufacturing trade throughout the 19th century. Their aspirations were indeed realised as tinned milk production proved to be a very stable business allowing Nestle to consolidate their manufacturing operations on the site for the next 100 years.

Staverton Factory has made a valuable contribution to the success of the Nestle Company and continues to play an important part in the development of the business as it moves into the next millenium. People have always been the most important asset of the Company and their hard work, dedication, commitment and loyalty over the years has helped to build Nestle into the massive international organisation it is today. This brief history describes some of these people, the management and staff, their roles at the factory, their working conditions and wages, the effects on them through the busy and difficult times and some of the many who spent their entire working lives at the factory. It recounts the change of products over the years and the circumstances that prompted these changes, how the site has expanded to match the growth of the business and the continuous replacement, modification and upgrading of plant, equipment and amenities to respond to the factory's constantly changing business needs. It narrates how the factory has evolved from a small condensery, producing a couple of tinned milk products, to the huge multi-million pounds chilled desserts operation that occupies the site today. The site has grown from a small cluster of old mill buildings into a considerable complex of modern manufacturing facilities that are designed to equip the factory for the business challenges of the next century.

Staverton Factory has always been considered an integral part of the local community, not only for providing secure employment opportunities, and the important role that it plays in contributing to the local economy, but also for its long standing support of the village in both financial and practical terms. Many community projects and Staverton institutions have benefited from the generous financial support provided by the factory over the years and the many factory employees who have willingly given their services and free time to get involved with and help run village organisations and events. Nestle's connection with the village has made up an important chapter in Staverton's history and its continuing presence, confirmed by the latest expansion plans, will ensure that the Company and the community maintain their long and special relationship for many more years to come.

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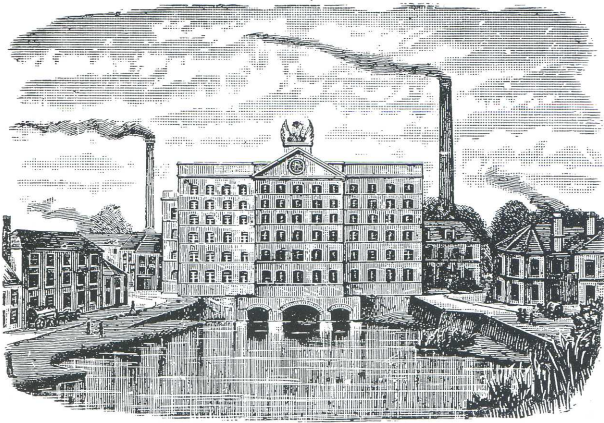
A CENTURY OF

Nestlé

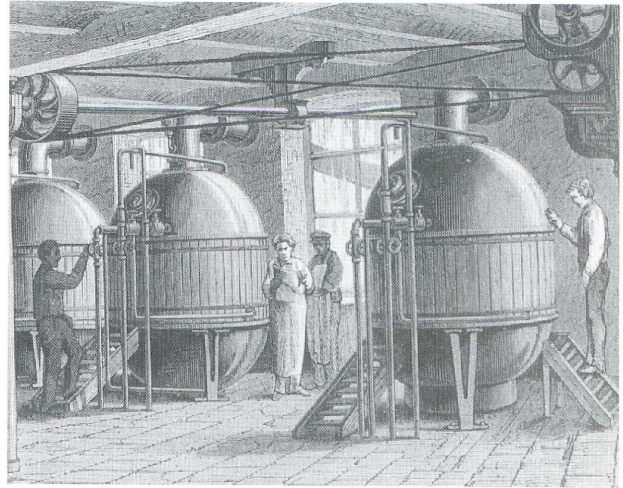
AT STAVERTON

1897 - 1997

WRITTEN BY PETER LAVIS



The Staverton Cloth Mill in the 1850's.



Copper Vacuum Pans - Late 19th Century.

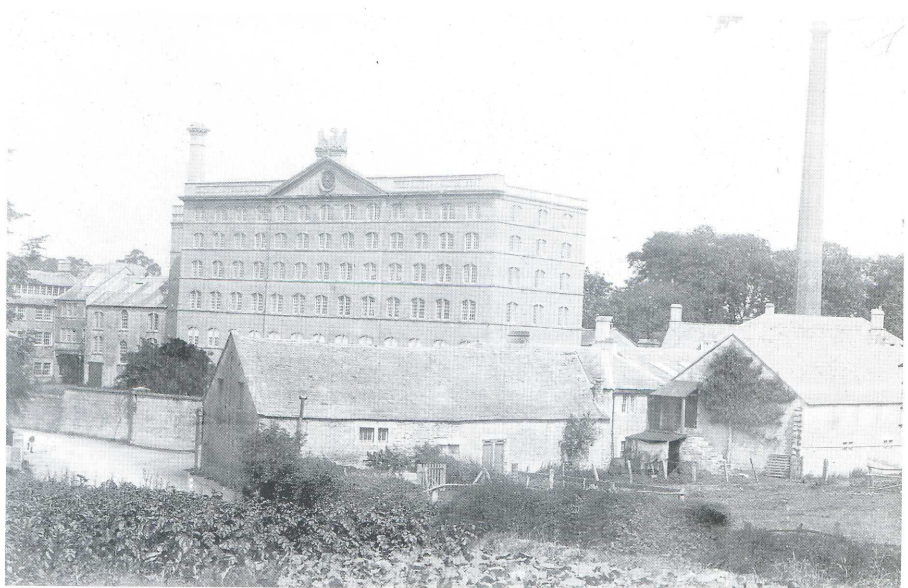
ANGLO-SWISS CONDENSED MILK CO.

Bond James	Staverton	Wills	Dec 7 '97		4/5 4/5
Purnell Henry	"	"	" " "		3/9 3/9
Baldwin A	"	"	" " "		3/4 3/4
Baldwin M ^{rs}	"	"	29 Dec 97	28 Feb 99	1/8 1/8
Pendle J.	Trowbridge	"	26 Jan 98		3/4 3/4
Knowles W	"	"	31 Jan 98		2/8 2/11
W. H. ...	"	"	"		3/2 3/2

Anglo-Swiss Letterhead and the first Staverton Factory Workman's Register.

Below Left - Fred Rogers, first Staverton Factory Manager.

Below Right - Staverton Mill in 1897.



A CENTURY OF NESTLE AT STAVERTON 1897-1997

The Nestle Company commemorated a unique anniversary at the end of 1997, for at this point in time they had been manufacturing food products on their Staverton Factory site for exactly 100 years. This remarkable achievement is unique because no other Company has operated continuously for such a length of time in the thousand year history of industries on the site. Old records indicate that mills have been operating on the banks of the River Avon at Staverton since the 10th century, initially as corn mills and later as fulling mills and cloth factories. However, most of these businesses were short lived, constantly changed hands and few survived more than a few decades most going out of business for a whole variety of reasons, mainly due to bankruptcies, especially in the 18th and 19th centuries. Staverton mill did enjoy a 'heyday' in the early 19th century when the West of England cloth trade was at its peak but by the 1850's the English woollen trade was beginning to decline and had virtually all but died out by the 1880's. During this relatively prosperous half century the mill's ownership still changed hands many times, it remained empty for 17 years in the 1850's and 60's and was owned for only short periods of time by many different clothiers and consortiums. No business in Staverton's long history has survived long enough to put down roots and become established so it's indeed a unique achievement that Nestle have steadfastly kept their business operating, unabated, on the site for a century and, with current expansion plans already underway, look like remaining for many more years to come.

The Nestle connection with Staverton came in 1897 when the Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Company bought the empty village woollen cloth mill for £6,000. Anglo-Swiss had been founded in 1866 when two brothers, Charles and George Page, began producing tins of condensed milk at their small dairy in Cham, Switzerland. The business grew rapidly and in 1873 the Company moved into the UK and set up a condensery at Chippenham. A year later operations further expanded with canned milk factories at Aylesbury and Middlewich and as growth in the UK market continued a fourth condensery was needed by the 1890's. Anglo-Swiss looked around for suitable sites to develop another factory and considered sites where existing buildings could be easily converted, in areas where fresh milk was abundant and with a local work force that could readily be recruited. Staverton cloth mill, nestling on the banks of the River Avon, seemed an ideal spot. It was located in a rich dairying area of the West Country with a plentiful supply of fresh milk and, due to the recent decline of the local cloth industry, many men and women were seeking new employment.

Anglo-Swiss's first task was to convert some of the existing mill buildings into facilities for producing tinned milk and engineers were sent by the Company and from Chippenham Factory to begin the work. Power for the mill was provided by three coal fired steam engines of 50, 45 and 25hp respectively and the old iron made breastshot waterwheels were still in place and said to be able to generate 60hp when the water level in the river was at a suitable height. The Company soon replaced these 'unreliable' waterwheels with a 43hp Vortex water turbine but, as later events were to show, this became as equally unreliable as its predecessors. Initially, the production equipment installed included one six foot copper vacuum pan, Dixon heaters, coolers, a rudimentary filling and packing line with nailing section, milk tipping apparatus and some of the old mill machinery, such as steam engines and boilers were also utilised. The processing equipment was installed on the ground and first floor of the main mill building with the filling and packing operation sited in the outbuildings which made up the extensive complex on the south side of the main block. Control of Anglo-Swiss's 'newest' condensery came under Chippenham Factory which, almost from its start up in 1873, had been run by three members of the Roger's family, Fred and his two sons Oscar and Donald. Fred was given the task of managing both factories and Donald was sent down to Staverton to look after matters 'on the spot'. The factory began to recruit its first workforce in December 1897 and the first hourly paid worker to be engaged was James Bond, designated employee 001, whose task was to 'drive' the factory's steam engines. Before the end of the year Staverton resident Henry Purnell had been taken on as a stoker and Arthur Baldwin engaged to look after the reception of fresh milk deliveries. Wages for these first three employees varied from £1.30 to £1.00 for a 60 hour week. In 1898 the work force began to build up and many new recruits were sent to Chippenham factory for training before taking up their positions at Staverton Condensery.

One of the most important jobs in the new operation was that of Panman and James Beaven was given the task of ensuring that each batch of condensed milk was processed correctly. With the necessary conversions and installations completed, and a small team of operators trained up, the first manufacture of Milkmaid Sweetened Condensed Milk, in 12ozs tins, came off the production line in March 1898. In the early years of Staverton's operation all the tins needed for the production were made at Chippenham factory and transported the ten miles by horse and cart, the return journey taking a whole day to complete. It would be another eight years before Staverton would install its own tin making plant and be able to eliminate this long and laborious hauling operation. Local farmers were recruited to supply milk to the Condensery and this was delivered by horse and cart in 17 gallon churns each one weighing over 2 cwts when full. Local accounts of the daily milk supply operation at the factory describe long lines of horses and carts, loaded with churns, stretching down the road as their drivers waited patiently to be called forward for off-loading.

Most of the production operations were carried out manually in the early days with the tins being hand filled, pin hole sealed, hand labelled and packed into wooden boxes which then had their wooden covers nailed on. The sugar needed for the condensed milk was received in 2 cwt sacks which had to be manhandled from the delivery vehicle to the sugar store and then hauled by hand to the boiling pans. Staverton's work force had increased to about 140 by the end of the first year and wages varied from around £1 a week for men and 50p for women workers. The small office staff and maintenance personnel fared slightly better than their shop floor colleagues, not only in wages earned but also in job security, because in the early years the work force fluctuated considerably depending on the volume of production required and obviously the 'essential' staff employees were retained through the slack periods. The canals and railways were used to despatch the boxes of condensed milk in the early days with some consignments being loaded onto horse and wagon transport and hauled to a warehouse on the nearby Kennet and Avon Canal wharf from where they were placed on barges which ferried them to distribution depots in Bath and Bristol. Returning barges would then bring back raw materials for the factory. The Railway was used more often than the relatively slow canal barge method with horses and carts and Sentinel steam wagons, plus trailers, conveying the finished products to Holt Station and the old Midland Railway terminus in Bath. At times, the steam wagons were less reliable than the horse transport often running into trouble on the journeys by getting stuck in deep ruts and quagmires in the winter and creating clouds of dust, which clogged their moving parts, in the dry summer months. On a number of occasions these lumbering steam wagons ended up in ditches, or crashing, causing long delays on the journeys and the late delivery of the goods.

Production increased slowly by the turn of the century and by 1901 two hundred local farmers were delivering their milk into the factory. Experimental production of Unsweetened Condensed Milk began in 1902, Anglo-Swiss being the pioneers of this new product in the UK, and later it was sold under the now famous brand name of 'Ideal Milk'. With two different products now being manufactured at Staverton, the volumes and work force gradually increased under the watchful eye of George Hussey, the factory's timekeeper and first unofficial labour overseer. Fred Rogers, the Manager of both Chippenham and Staverton factories, was responsible for ensuring that the Staverton work force received their pay and made a weekly journey on a bicycle, from his base at Chippenham, to deliver and supervise the payment of the wages. A function that was completely natural and necessary then would be totally unacceptable in today's climate of muggings, armed robbery and wage snatches and, although no incidents of this nature were ever recorded, the Manager later used the railway for this journey before acquiring one of the early Ford cars. Further alterations to the buildings and the installation of more production equipment was carried out in 1903 including the provision of Staverton factory's first telephone system.

The first major change to the Company's structure came in 1905 when Anglo-Swiss and the Henri Nestle Company agreed to a merger and the new Company formed became The Nestle and Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Company. The merger greatly increased the size and scope of the new Company in the UK which would now have a combined work force of 3,000 nationwide. Henri Nestle, a Swiss chemist, had started a baby milk business in Vevey, Switzerland in 1867 and, like Anglo-Swiss, his enterprise had grown considerably by the turn of the century and was keenly competing with its rival for the condensed milk market in the UK. After the two companies joined forces it was agreed that their headquarters would be in Vevey and to the present day the Nestle Company, the largest food company in the world, still retains its Head Office in the Swiss town where Henri Nestle first set up his small laboratory.



A chain driven steam lorry in trouble on the river bridge.



Anglo-Swiss workers training at Chippenham Factory

<p>MILKMAID CONDENSED MILK is the purest milk of cows, to which best refined sugar has been added.</p> <p>MILKMAID CONDENSED MILK can be used undiluted instead of cream and sugar. Diluted with 2½ parts of water by volume, it equals normal milk, plus the added sugar. Greater dilution, while, of course, not producing a fluid of the equivalent composition of milk, is recommended for most ordinary household and culinary purposes, owing to the nutritive value of the sugar.</p>	<p>PRODUCED IN THE UNITED KINGDOM</p>	<h1>MILKMAID</h1> <p>SWEETENED CONDENSED MILK</p>	<p>LARGE SIZE TIN</p>
		<p>Real Trade Mark</p>	
		<p>CONTAINING NOT LESS THAN 10% OF BUTTER FAT</p> <p>The</p>	



Above - The First Products made at Staverton Condensery.

Left - Staverton Factory Girls on the Bridge in 1905.

IDEAL MILK

Fresh Milk Concentrated to the Consistency of Cream.

IDEAL BRAND

REGD. TRADE MARK

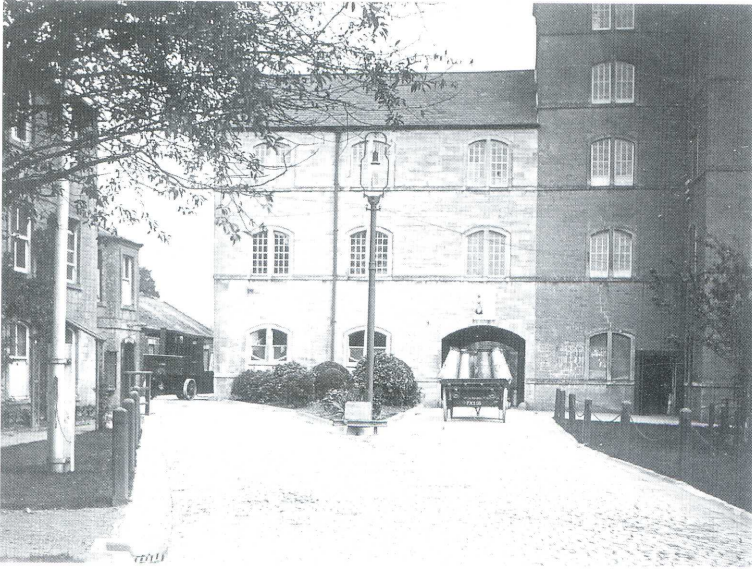
No Sugar Added. No Preservative.

NESTLE & ANGLO-SWISS CONDENSED MILK CO.
CHAM & VEVEY (Switzerland), & LONDON.

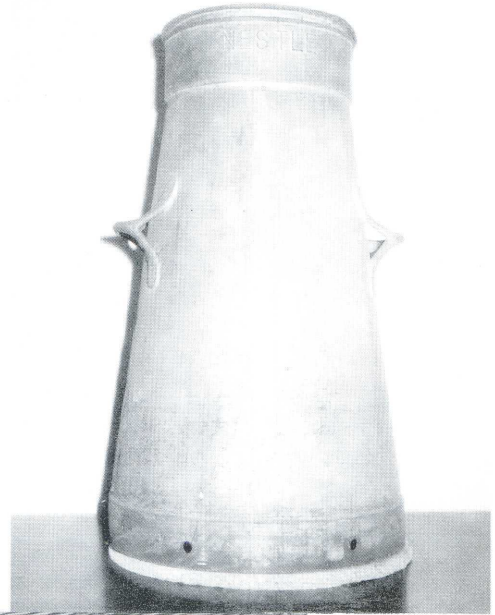
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P.O.W.

PREPARED IN ENGLAND.

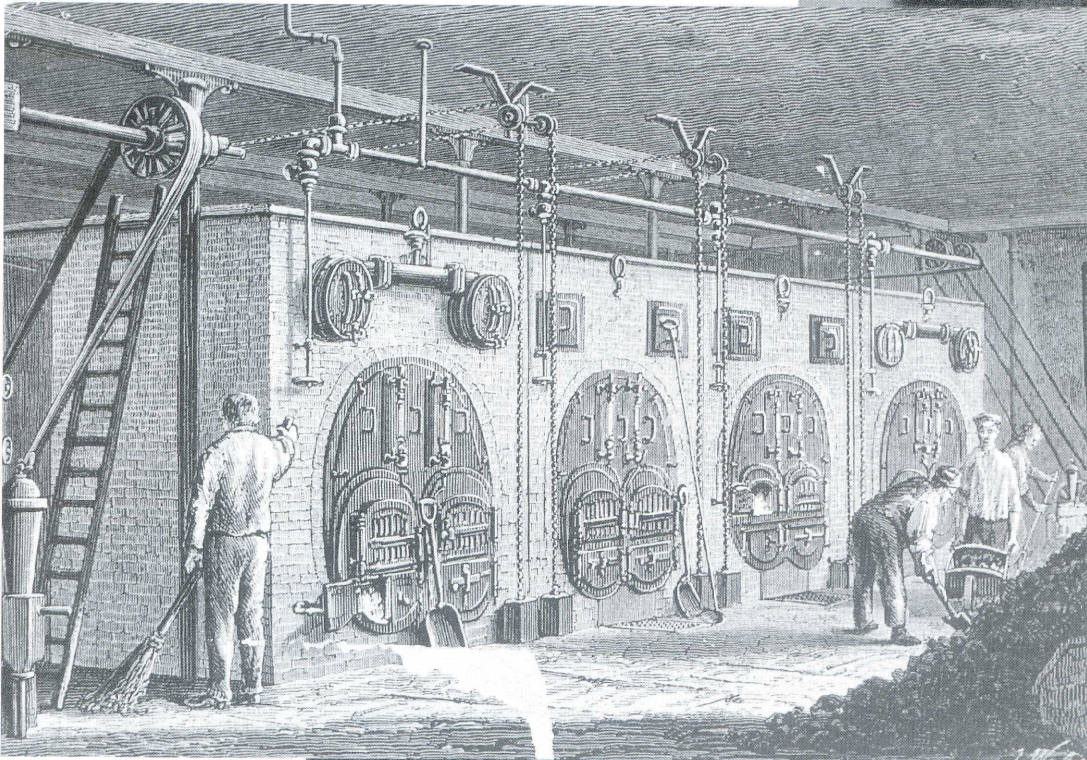
NET WEIGHT 12 OZS.



Churns of milk being taken into the Condensery 1899.



Above
A 17 Gallon
Milk Churn.



Above
Early Boilerhouse.

Right
Staverton Factory
Girls 1906.

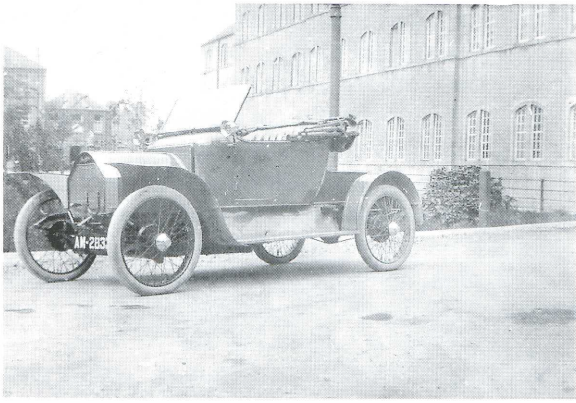


Local accounts of the 1905 merger refer to Staverton Factory being made 'spick and span' in anticipation of the visit by 'top hatted gentlemen' from the Swiss Nestle Company. The merger was enthusiastically welcomed by the local work force who were more than pleased with the celebration bonus which varied from £1.75 in cash to a £5 Company Bond. The following year the first production of skimmed condensed milk began, initially to meet the demand from the Chinese market, and later to become established on the home market. The surplus cream, generated from the milk separation process, was turned into butter and by 1908 two tons of butter was being manufactured per day most of it being sent to London and sold on the wholesale markets. The increase in production at Staverton prompted further expansion with a new steriliser being installed in 1906 and the factory's own tin making plant being set up in one of the old mill's outbuildings. The work force had increased and was now more permanent and social activities were starting to be organised including the formation of the factory's first football team. During the years prior to the first world war the Company's Staverton and Chippenham employees enjoyed an annual outing, paid for by the Company, and these took them to popular seaside resorts for the day and, in 1907, to watch the opening of the White City in London. The eagerly awaited day of the annual 'treats' started with the Chippenham contingent boarding an excursion train at 6am and travelling to Trowbridge station to be joined by their colleagues from Staverton. Each worker received sixpence (2½p) to spend on the trip and this invariably was used to purchase, amongst other things, two pints of beer and an ounce of tobacco.

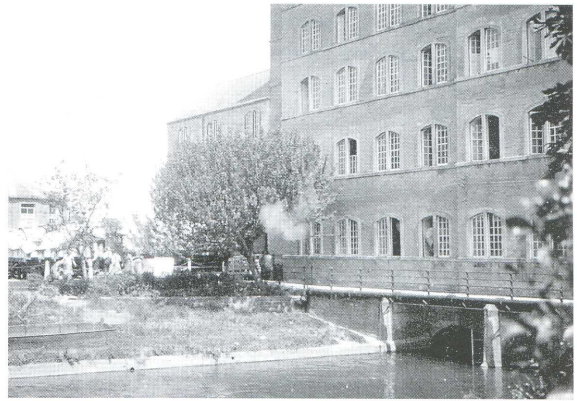
Most of the factory work during this decade continued to be done by hand with heavy cases of tinned milk, 17 gallon churns, boxes of tinsplate and 2cwt sacks of sugar all having to be man handled. A team of stokers kept the coal fired boilers supplied by shovels and a great deal of sweat as well as removing ashes and helping to unload the wagons of coal that had been picked up from Holt station and the Staverton canal wharves. By 1910 the Company's four English condenseries were producing 225,000 cases of tinned milk annually and Staverton's share in this volume included 81,000 cases of Unsweetened Milk. The factory was producing tinned milk products for the Admiralty whose orders for the Company's 'Superb' milk stipulated that it must contain 9% butter fat and 25% non fat solids. Butter production, under the supervision of Herbert Griffen, had increased and the factory's 'English Creamery Butter', in salted and unsalted varieties, was packed in 56lb and 24lb boxes, 2lb rolls and sold for 5p per lb. The Skimmed Condensed Milk being produced was sold under the 'Blue Joss', 'Teapot', 'Cows Head' and 'Milk Jug' labels as well as fifty or more special labels supplied by the buyers who required their own labels on the tins. As Home Trade, Admiralty and Export orders increased the quality of the fresh milk became a crucial factor and to ensure that hygiene and quality standards were being maintained by the farmers Staverton appointed James Parker as its Dairy Inspector in 1910. Previously, this job had been carried out by the Chippenham Factory Farm Inspectors and by the Factory Managers themselves.

The Company had built up a good repertoire with their employees since the turn of the century and this was highlighted in 1911 when they announced that they would be starting up a pension scheme for workers who met certain service criteria and initially payments for retired men would be £24 a year with £18 a year for female pensioners. Richard Wells, who had joined the Company as a fitter in 1900, was appointed 'in charge of the control and maintenance of all mechanical equipment' in July 1912 after undergoing extensive training in the Company's engineering workshops in Switzerland and this position became the forerunner of the later Factory Chief Engineers. One of the first concerns in his new role was to resolve the problem of the factory's main steam engine frequently breaking down and halting production for many hours on several occasions. The water turbine, described earlier as 'unreliable' as a back up to the main power supply, proved this to be the case when during these major breakdowns it couldn't be operated if the water level in the river was too high. He was also immediately involved in another major construction project at the factory and oversaw the completion of a rank of six workmen's cottages adjoining the old weavers cottages in Nasmilco Lane. These new cottages were needed to house some of the factory's 'key' workers and their families and added to the nine existing cottages, built by the cloth mill owner in 1810, which sat on the high bank overlooking the factory.

Nestle and Anglo-Swiss further expanded their UK business in 1912 when they acquired the Salisbury based firm of Fussells. Fussells had been selling their tinned milk products under the colourful 'Butterfly' brand labels and had built up a good export trade to South Africa.



Factory Manager's first Car c1900



The flumes underneath the Old Mill where the Water Turbine was located.



Staverton Factory's First Football Team
1906

- Back: H. Garrett, S. Davis, H. Beaven
 Middle: G. Wickham, T. Hannam,
 R. Wells, H. Purnell, H. Griffin,
 W. Clift, J. Vince, T. Fido (Trainer).
 Front: B. Clift, T. Wells, A. Matthews
 (Capt). W, Chapman, A. Stevens.



Left - Factory Employees enjoyed an Annual Company Outing in the 1900's

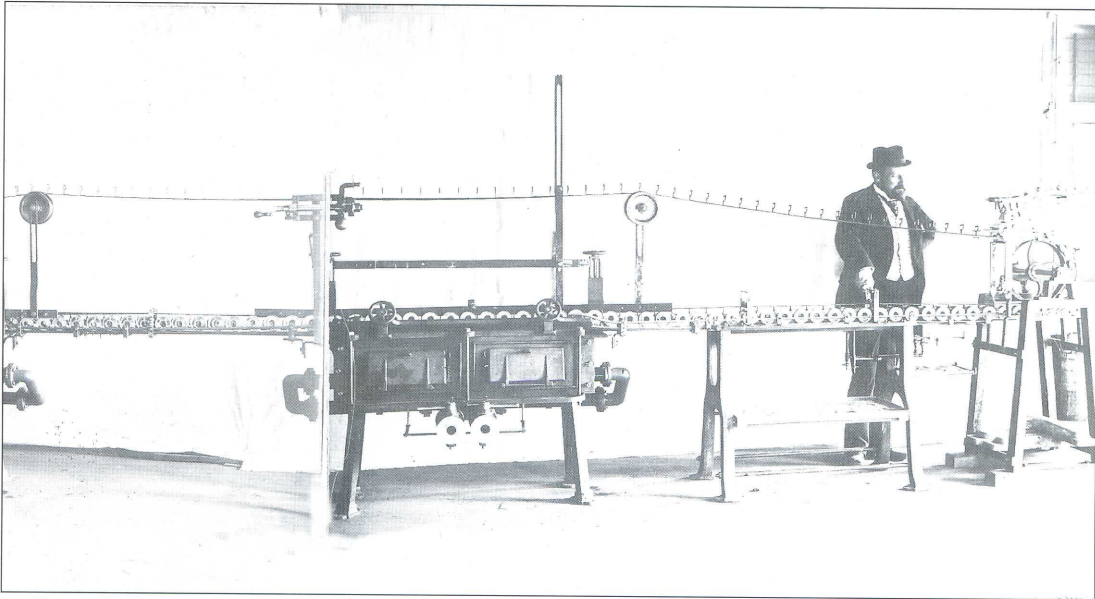
Soon after the takeover Staverton began to produce Fussell's products and later the Butterfly range was to be found alongside Nestle's Milkmaid, Ideal and Skimmed Milk on shop shelves throughout the country. Production continued to increase and the railway was used more and more, not only to despatch finished goods, but also to deliver milk to the nearest stations to the factory. The supplies, in churns, were collected from Bath, Holt and Trowbridge stations by horse and cart and steam wagons and the continual movements of the latter in and out of the Condensery began to cause severe damage to the blue brick paving in the factory's yards to such an extent that in 1912 plans were made to carry out extensive repairs and re-lay the surfaces with the recently invented tarmac.

Labour problems hit the Company in early 1913 when the Chippenham Factory employees went on strike after two workers had been dismissed for joining a Union. They had become members of the Worker's Union, established in 1898, to try and put pressure on the Company to increase pay rates, considered at the time to be the lowest in the area. Men's wages were still around £1 for a 55 hour week with female employees receiving 60p for working the same number of hours. When the Chippenham management refused to re-instate the sacked workers the rest of the factory came out on strike and asked their colleagues at Staverton to join them. Staverton's 220 workers refused and Mr. Ellery, the Worker's Union official, backed by a large number of the Chippenham strikers marched to Staverton Factory to try and persuade them to change their minds. A meeting was held on the meadows in front of the factory and Ellery, standing on one of the high stones that line the road, tried to address the Staverton workers, who had gathered, but was repeatedly shouted down. The lively exchanges that ensued were suddenly interrupted by Fred Rogers, Manager of both factories, who approached the Union official shouting in support of the Staverton workers, calling him a 'blackguard' and urging them 'to give him one'! Fierce arguments broke out between the Staverton group, led by a 'buxom lass', and their Chippenham colleagues and with the local work force refusing to listen to Ellery's pleas they all marched back into the factory leaving the band of strikers out in the road. Once inside the factory gates, and chanting 'for he's a jolly good fellow' in praise of the Manager, the Staverton workers jeered their Chippenham 'brothers' who had little choice but to disperse and leave the village.. Without support from other condenseries the strike soon 'fizzled out' and Chippenham returned to normal working within a short time. The confrontation, however, had soured relations between the Staverton and Chippenham employees who declined to get together on future annual Company 'treats'.

Despite the unrest, business was booming by 1913 and to meet the growing demand for the Company's products, factory extensions had become necessary. The boilerhouse was enlarged to accommodate new boilers and some of the old cloth mill's outbuildings, on the south side of the site, were demolished to make way for a new Tinshop. The two new Babcock water tube boilers with mechanical chain grate stokers were installed in September with a 120 tube economiser. A new factory chimney was needed to service the modernised boilerhouse and the contract was given to the German firm of Alphons Custodis who began its construction by the end of the year. Milk condensing was now being done on three vacuum pans, a 4 coil 8 foot pan and two 3 coil 6 foot pans, the larger one with a capacity of 50lbs of milk a minute. By the end of 1913 shop floor wages had risen to £1.10 per 55 week for men and 65p a week for women. Foremen's pay varied from £1.80 a week for process and filling staff to £2.10 a week earned by the maintenance shop Foremen.

The new chimney was completed by early 1914 except for the water tank which was due for erection in March. Specifications for the chimney stated that it would be 172ft 3ins. high with a 6ft 6ins. diameter at the top. It was to be built with perforated, radiated blocks with a fire brick lining up to 80ft and constructed to carry a 40 cubic metre capacity water tank at a height of 82ft from ground level. The chimney would stand on a 6ft deep concrete foundation which would be 23ft square at the base, 16ft square at the top and the stack able to withstand wind speeds of up to 100mph. An iron step ladder would be built inside the chimney, a lighting conductor fixed to the top and a 4ft cast iron soot door fitted near the base. Cost of the chimney would be £664 with an extra £392 for the water tank and fittings, and eleven weeks were allowed for the completion of the job.

Faults were immediately discovered with the new structure and Custodis were ordered to correct them. A wrong sized soot door had been fitted and the chimney top was incorrect and had to be reconstructed. It was also noted that the stack's internal diameter at the top was only 5ft 11ins. instead of the agreed 6ft 6ins., but with the structure now standing 172ft high little could be done about it other than pull it down and start again. Needless to say, this didn't happen but further problems were encountered when the water tank was due to be fitted in March.



Tin Making Line at the turn of the Century.

<p>TRADE MARK</p>  <p>FUSSELL'S CONDENSED MILK MACHINE SKIMMED SWEETENED</p>	<p>BLUE BUTTERFLY BRAND</p> <p>PRODUCED IN ENGLAND</p>	<p>PRODUCED IN ENGLAND</p>	<p>CONDENSED MACHINE - SKIMMED MILK, SWEETENED.</p> <p>UNFIT FOR BABIES.</p> <p>THIS TIN CONTAINS THE EQUIVALENT OF ONE AND SEVEN-EIGHTHS (1$\frac{7}{8}$) PINTS OF SKIMMED MILK, WITH SUGAR ADDED.</p>
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Fussell's 'Butterfly' Brand Skimmed Milk Label. Below - The Nasmilco Cottages above the Factory.



Richard Wells
Staverton's First
Factory Engineer.

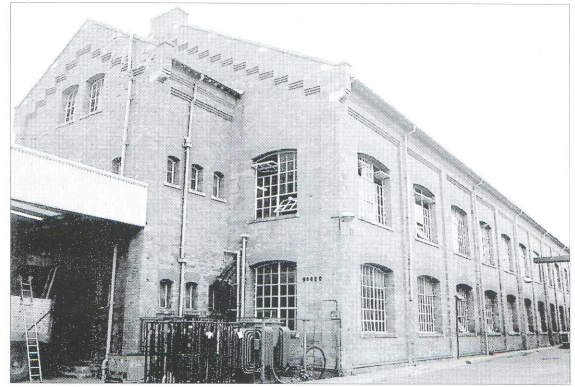


The tank had been built in Dortmund, Germany and shipped over to the UK accompanied by the tank erectors who, on arrival, could not speak a word of English and had no money. The confusion was so great that the Staverton management requested that an interpreter be urgently sent down from the London office and the erectors were given a £5 loan to ease their financial difficulties. That, unfortunately, was not the end of the saga for when the tank was lifted for fixing to the chimney its dimensions were wrong and it wouldn't fit. Modifications were carried out on site and the chimney was finally completed by April. The new Tinshop was also completed in 1914. Constructed by Walkerdines, the red brick three storey building had stairs, lifts and toilets at each end and occupied a site on the south side of the factory which had once been the old mill's rack field. A long corridor, containing the can runs, was constructed to link the top floor of the new Tinshop with the milk Filling Room which was some distance away in the main building of the old mill. Walkerdines also had the contract to pull down the old 125ft octagonal mill chimney, now redundant, and agreed to complete the work for £25 provided they could keep all the bricks that came from the demolition.

Water supply problems had been troubling the factory for a number of years and the situation had become so difficult by 1914 that the Company began to explore ways of trying to improve it. The 6,000 gallons a day needed, at an annual cost of £77, were essential to the milk process operation and many problems could be encountered if the supply suddenly failed. Many ideas were considered including the drilling of boreholes, tapping other local water supplies and even erecting water tanks and filter beds on the factory's 'island' to utilise the river water. A natural spring on the bank behind the new Tinshop, used for hundreds of years by some villagers to obtain water, was even considered as an additional water source. None of these ideas, however, materialised and the factory continued to rely on the local mains water supply and the reserve supply in the new chimney tank. Prior to the start of the First World War the factory was employing 116 men and 140 women and employees with more than 10 years service were now getting six days paid holiday a year including Christmas Day and the annual outing day. Staff salaries varied by rank with Chief Clerk Frank Brewer earning £15 a month, Reg Munday, the factory's General Foreman receiving £14 a month and a junior clerk £6 a month. Donald Rogers, the Acting Factory Manager, received the usual senior management benefits, such as a house rented for him by the Company, and a Company vehicle which he exchanged in 1914 for a brand new Studebaker car costing £295.

The outbreak of the First World War in August 1914 stimulated a huge demand for tinned milk products and the factory output immediately came under the control of the Ministry of Munitions and the Admiralty. The Admiralty, who had been buying Nestle and Anglo-Swiss tinned milk for many years, would now increase their orders and over 6,500 tonnes of Ideal Milk a year would be supplied to them throughout the duration of the war. Several key Staverton workers had been drafted for active service at the start of the war and a number of men had volunteered in the first few weeks of the conflict. To add to the factory's troubles, local people were becoming concerned about the new chimney and wondered if its recent construction, after all by a German firm, had anything to do with the war. Rumours were rife around the area that it could have been built as a landmark for German Zeppelin raids and others that the bulbous water tank really contained a secret observation post. Salisbury Condensery had recently had a similar style chimney built by Germans and the same concerns were being expressed by people living near that factory. The situation became so bad at one stage that the Salisbury management put out a statement refuting the allegations, although their counterparts at Staverton refrained from taking similar action, and the fuss soon died down. By October the factory was facing difficulties meeting the sudden increased demand and machines were beginning to break down through overwork. Milk supply problems were being experienced, blamed on the 'disruptive attitude' adopted by the farm labourers, call-ups were taking away experienced operators and, to add further to the troubles, a fever epidemic had caused a high degree of absenteeism through illness. Demands by the Ministry meant that the output of Unsweetened had to be considerably increased and a second homogeniser, belt driven by a small steam engine, was installed together with another Dixon heater. To boost the factory's power supply a new steam turbine, connected directly with a dynamo was also installed.

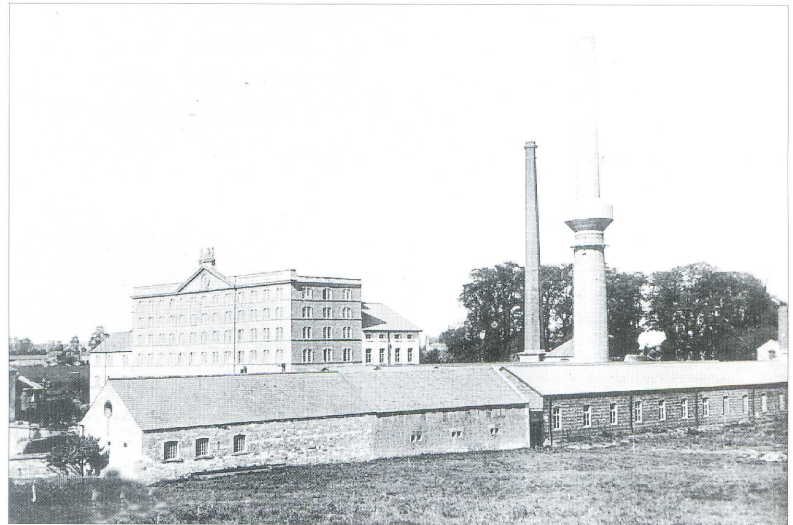
The continuing drain on experienced manpower was beginning to affect the smooth running of the plant; 17 men had already been called up by December, and the Company began sending letters to the military authorities requesting their return.



Staverton's Tinshop, built 1914.

Above - Workmen building the new Tinshop 1914.

Right - The new Factory Chimney alongside the old Cloth Mill Chimney 1914.



Below - Rare Ariel view of the Factory taken in the early 1920's.



Two of the men concerned worked in the recently opened tin making plant and the retention of their 'expertise' was considered essential to the overall operation of the factory. Most of the factory's production was going to the war effort and the Company, now considered an important war industry, arranged for the Ministry of Munitions to issue war badges and certificates to factory employees designating them 'essential war workers' and immune from call up. The work force increased to 289 in 1915 and Donald Rogers, who had looked after the running of the Condensery almost from its opening in 1897, was appointed Staverton's first resident Factory Manager. His long awaited appointment, however, was immediately overshadowed by a very serious accident in February 1915 which resulted in Staverton's first fatality. Nightwatchman William Hodges died from severe pelvic and internal injuries when the main factory gate fell off its hinges and crushed him. Building contractors, working on the site and using a vacant stable for their horses, were blamed for damaging the gate hinges as they entered and left the factory. An additional production line had to be installed to cope with the extra volume of Unsweetened Milk now required and by the middle of the year a new steriliser, filling and cap sealing plant, new packing set and nailing machine were added to the factory's manufacturing equipment along with a reconditioned Robey 50Kw engine and generator which supplemented the site's remaining two steam engines and 30Kw water turbine. More warehouse space was provided and, because of transport difficulties caused by the war, proposals were being considered by the factory to install their own railway siding. Negotiations began with the local landowners to purchase part of a field behind the factory but initially the Keddle family refused to sell and it was to be a further two years before the Company finally secured the land they needed for £1,160. By this time, however, the factory's situation had changed and it would be many more years ahead, 1935 in fact, that the factory's railway siding would materialise.

Shortages of raw materials and supply problems began to have a greater affect on the factory by the second year of the war and the availability of coal supplies, which could be directed to other areas of the war effort, was causing concern. Tests were carried out to try and find an alternative fuel source and experiments with a mixture of coal and coffee grounds, at a ratio of 2 to 1, were carried out in the boilerhouse in August. These tests were not very successful, the idea was abandoned and the factory 'crossed its fingers' and hoped that the vital coal supply would be maintained. Union troubles surfaced again in 1915 when the Worker's Union, who had managed to recruit a few members at the factory, began making demands for more pay and better conditions. One request was for overtime pay of time and a half for anyone who worked after 8pm at night and an increase in the bonus paid to women and girls. Male workers, by this time, were earning £1.47 a week for 55 hours with their female colleagues getting 85p including a 10p war bonus. The Worker's Union was desperately trying to establish itself in the factory and was making many demands on the Company to try and gain more support from the work force and thus recruit more members. One demand in early 1915 was that the management should not keep the ladies toilets, in the new Tinshop, locked preventing the women from using them whenever they wanted to. The Factory Manager, Donald Rogers, explained the reasons why giving a firm response to the complaint accusing the women of "time wasting" and noting that "nine or ten girls are in the toilet at any one time when it was designed to accommodate only three". His statement concluded that "this state of affairs is no credit to the girls nor is it wise from a health point of view". The firmness of his response echoed the old Victorian attitudes still prevalent at the time and the Union was forced to obtain assurances from the female workers that this 'unhealthy' practice would stop before the management would agree to keep the toilets permanently unlocked.

The factory's manufacturing difficulties continued as 1915 drew to a close and demands by the Ministry of War to release more Staverton men for active service increased. Management reported that the factory was badly suffering from 'loss of expertise', replacement of male labour was almost impossible because of the war, and efforts were intense to prevent 'badged' men from being called up. Instead, requests were sent to the military authorities for the return of their 'essential' workers particularly the two who had worked in the recently opened Tinshop, and considered to be vital to the efficient running of the tin making operation. One of them, fitter Howard Purnell, had been enlisted in the 5th Wilts at the start of the war, was wounded in the Dardanelles campaign, invalided home, and then attached to the 3rd Wilts currently stationed at Littlemore Camp near Weymouth. Howard, who had installed a lot of the new Tinshop equipment and knew it 'intimately', was badly needed to resolve a lot of the plant's current machinery problems and hopes were high in November that he would be returned from the army. These hopes, however, soon faded when his unit was sent to France and sadly, before the military 'red tape' could be unravelled for his release, he was killed at the Battle of the Somme in October 1916.

Herbert Griffen, Foreman of the Milk Cleaning Dept., also enlisted at the start of the war and the subject of repeated requests for his release, was eventually returned to carry on his important duties at the factory. Twenty four factory men had been enlisted for military service by March 1916 although the Company had managed to get five returned including 16 years old Tinshop worker Gilbert Griffen who had disguised his age in order to join up. Continual pressure from the War Ministry to release more men for the armed forces was stubbornly resisted by the Staverton Management who replied to the authorities in March 1916 that "no new men had been taken on since July last year, the female work force had been increased to 170 to replace men already called up" and "we have new machinery in the Tinshop to erect, two new sterilisers, a new unsweetened filling and double seaming plant, a new labelling and wrapping plant and a new condensing plant for our recently acquired 75hp steam engine, all of which we have to do ourselves". The Ministry were not at all sympathetic and responded angrily by withdrawing some of the 'protective' badges already given to Staverton's younger 'essential' workers and announcing that no more new badges would be issued. Furthermore, the stubborn resistance by the factory to retain its workers incurred serious wrath from the military authorities who accused Staverton of being "unpatriotic", "the funkhole of Wiltshire as regards recruiting" and complained that "Staverton is a shirking ground for young men of military age who are badged but not indispensable". Nestle and Anglo-Swiss responded to this unfair criticism by stating that 24 factory men had enlisted and 19 were already engaged on active service. The Company as a whole had 435 men 'with the colours' and £10,000 a year was being paid to their dependents, each enlistee's family receiving 12½p a week plus an additional 2½p for each child. As the war intensified and more and more troops were being lost the military became desperate for replacements and all war badges were eventually withdrawn making every factory man, of service age, available for call up.

Wages had increased again by May 1917 to 3p per hour for men and 2p an hour for women with both sexes receiving an additional 40p a week war bonus. Staff received an additional 35% of their salaries as war bonus with extra payments between £5 and £10 a month for Foremen to compensate for the long hours some of them had been forced to work. The dramatic increase in the cost of living due to the war was affecting everyone and Company pension payments, first introduced in 1911, were increased to £40 a year for men and £32 a year for women. Milk supplies were still being collected from Holt and Trowbridge stations by local hauliers George Sheppard and Edwin Edwards although supplies of raw materials, particularly sugar, had become difficult due to the heavy toll on cargo shipping by the German submarine attacks in the Atlantic. Union troubles were still bubbling under the surface and broke out again at the factory in September 1917 when the Staverton 'members' suddenly decided not to work alongside their non-union colleagues and threatened to go on strike if they were forced to. Again, the factory management would not concede to their demands and within a few days were able to report that "the labour troubles were over" and had been settled with "no bad feelings and no disturbance of work". To try and pacify the unrest amongst the 'militant' union members in the factory the management set up a Works Committee on a trial basis with Albert Beames, a belt mender and oiler, as Chairman and Edwin Mundy, a packing room operator, as Secretary. Four men and five women, selected from all areas of the factory, formed the first committee.

In the last year of the war local appeals were being made for war funds and the Company responded with a generous donation of £500 to Trowbridge UDC for their National War Bonds Aeroplane Appeal. Smaller donations were being made to support the local cottage hospital, the Staverton and Hilperton Nurse funds and a scheme was introduced in early 1918 to look after employee's health care with each worker paying ½d a week out of their wages to Trowbridge Cottage Hospital in return for free attention. Wages continued to increase with male employees earning 3½d an hour and females 2½d an hour, plus a 55p bonus, and married workers with families also received an extra 5p a week for children under the age of 14. Staff salaries now varied from £22 a month for senior office workers to £12 a month for a junior clerk. Factory Foremen were paid between £2.25 and £2.50 a week, depending on departments, plus £1.30 war bonus. Staff sales were strictly limited and distribution was based on an employee's marital situation. A worker with children could buy 3 tins of Milkmaid or Ideal a week, a married worker with no children 2 tins a week with a single person restricted to one. 14ozs tins of Full Cream Sweetened Milk cost 5p and the smaller 12ozs tins of Unsweetened Milk 4p. A limited supply of butter was also available, from the 1,000lbs a week still being made, and each employee was allowed to purchase 4ozs per week.



Hot Room Girls 1916.



Donald Elliot Rogers, Staverton
Factory Manager 1915 - 1930.



Left - Tinshop Fitter Howard
Purnell who was killed at the
Battle of the Somme in 1916.

Right - War Badge given to
Essential Workers 1915.



Right - Management and Office
Staff 1919.

Back - Arthur Francis
James Parker
Albert Stevens
Fred Roberts
.....?

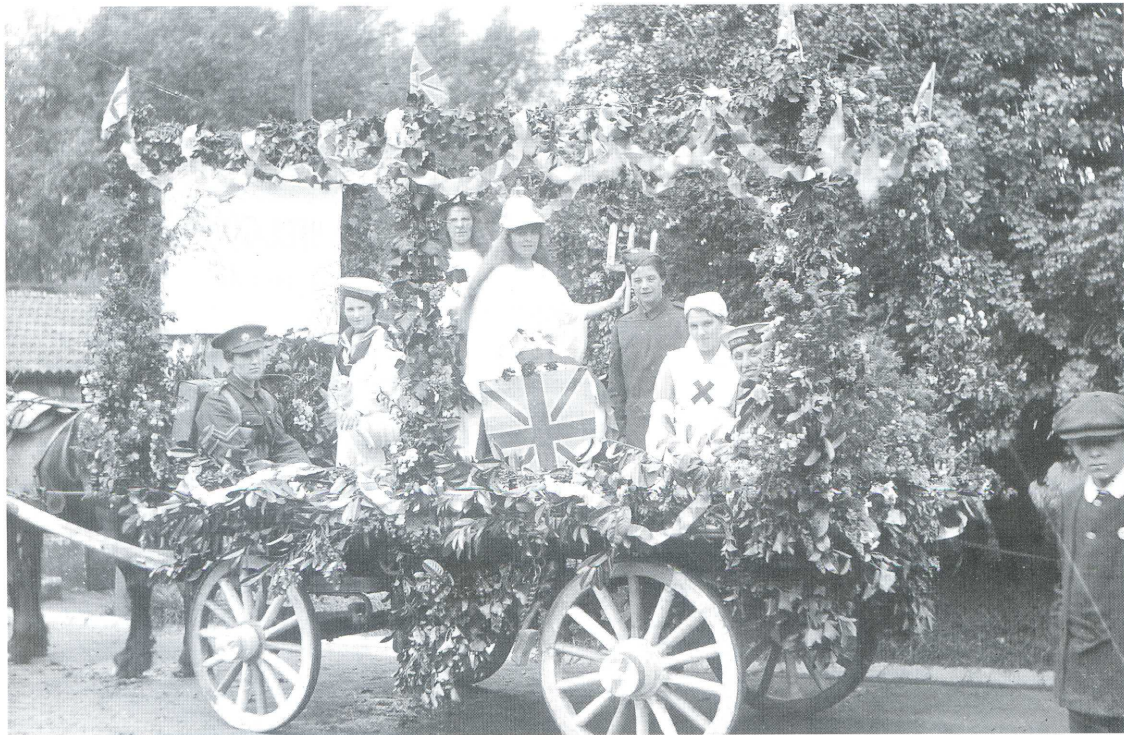
Front - George Hussey
Frank Brewer
Charles Gibbs.



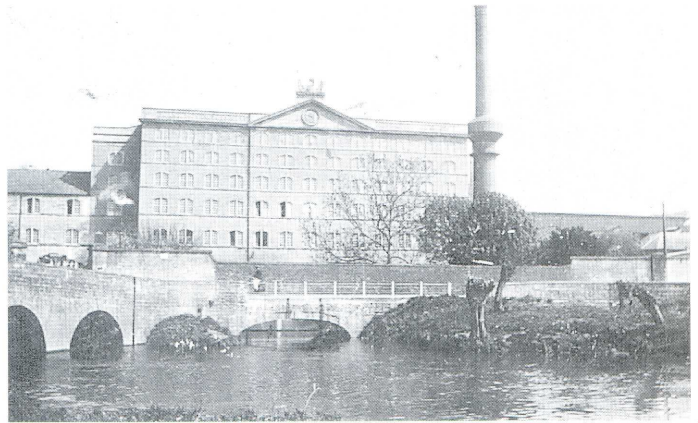
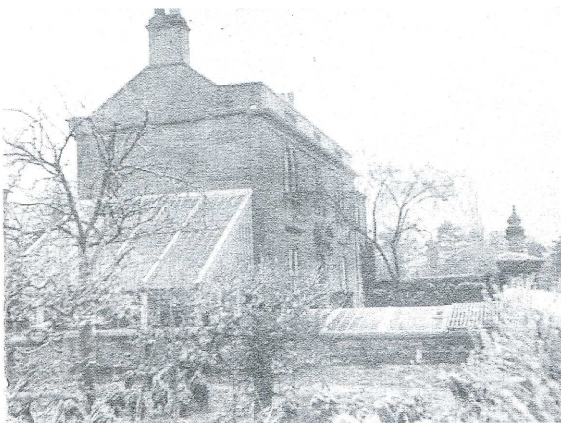
Fresh milk intake was running at 18,000 gallons a day in the peak most of this being turned into Ideal Milk for the Admiralty who were being supplied with 14½ million tins a year throughout the duration of the war. The Allied build up for the final offensives of the conflict required massive troop reinforcements to overpower the German army and every available man in the country was being called up to serve in the trenches. Despite the drain on Staverton's male work force in the last three years, and the loss of their 'expertise', more call-ups were issued to factory men in the summer of 1918. The factory, exasperated by the effects this was having on what had always been recognised as an essential war industry wrote another strong letter to the authorities complaining about the further drain on manpower resources which was now seriously affecting the operation of the factory. Outputs and quality were being jeopardised due to the loss of skilled operators and concerns were expressed that this could lead to a failure to deliver goods ordered under war contracts. Requests were made to stop recruiting at Staverton factory which would be left with only one fitter if all the others, who had already received their papers, had to go. Women and girls had been brought in to replace the enlisted men and this had led to more production problems as some of the female operators had found it difficult to cope with a number of the heavier tasks usually carried out by their male counterparts. The problems had become so acute that the Factory Manager, Donald Rogers, was constantly involved with 'trouble shooting' on the shop floor and had been unable to take a day off in the last three and a half years. Despite the factory's protestations more Staverton men were called up in August, including two of the three fitters left, and to add to the troubles the factory's General Foreman, Reg Munday, had left to join another company and a hay bacteria outbreak had seriously affected the quality of the milk being received with the loss of over 1,000 boxes of badly needed produce. The Company as a whole in the UK had 750 male workers in the armed forces and by 1918 were employing 1,354 women as replacements as against 662 in 1914.

The sudden end of the war in November 1918 was greeted with sighs of relief by the Staverton work force, who could now start to get the factory back onto a normal peacetime footing, although great sadness was being felt by everyone at the loss of eleven of their colleagues who had made the 'supreme sacrifice' and would never return. Altogether, 64 factory men were still in 'Khaki' and the Staverton management immediately requested their release and return to the factory. By the end of 1918 6,535 cows were supplying milk to the condenser, most of it being delivered in the 3,600 17 gallon churns owned by the factory, and on average 4,500 gallons a day were being delivered by rail, mostly into Trowbridge station where it was collected from a special siding and brought to the factory. Negotiations had been going on for some time to buy a local house for the Factory Manager and in November 1918 agreement was reached to purchase Wood Villa, a detached house opposite the Old Bear public house in Staverton village. The property, owned by Samuel Bird, was purchased for £445 after previously being rented by the Company for £18 a year, and when the deal was completed Donald Rogers was given permission to install an inside toilet and bathroom. Besides obtaining his Company house, the Staverton Manager was also seeking another vehicle and in March 1920 traded his old Studebaker, now worth £340, for a brand new black and soft dark green Paige motor car costing £875. When test driving the new vehicle prior to purchase he was impressed with its performance and commented to his colleagues that "it maintained a good grip on the road and there was very little vibration".

1919 dawned with the factory still trying to obtain the release of the rest of its 'essential' workers who were still retained by the military and gradually through the year they began to return. The work force numbered 313 and wages had increased again to £2.62 for men and £1.67 for women, both now working a 48 hour week. Staff salaries had increased by 10% and Foremen were being paid between £4 and £4.75 a week depending on their departments and scope of job. Arthur Baldwin, one of the first employees to be engaged in 1897, was still Foreman of the Milk Receiving Room, Herbert Griffen was in charge of separating and William Purnell ran the Sterilising Room. The Filling Room was supervised by Albert Matthews, the Wet Room by Herbert Bainton and the Packing Room by John Brown. One of the highest paid Foremen was George Wickham, in charge of the Tinshop, and another long serving employee, Herbert Gay, who had joined the Company in 1899, was Fitting Shop Foreman under Richard Wells, the Mechanical Overseer. William Weston had taken over as the factory's General Foreman, in charge of labour, and James Beaven, another founder member of the Staverton work force, was Senior Panman. The factory began to purchase its own lorry fleet in 1919 and the first two milk collection 'trolleys' arrived in March. They were 32hp 3 ton Albions with solid tyres, a 13" wheelbase and geared to a top speed of 15mph.



Below - Wood Villa, Factory Manager's House 1920. Above - Victory Parade 1919.



Above
The Factory in 1920.



Left
Three Ton Albion Milk
Collection Lorry 1919



Nestle & Anglo-Swiss War Memorial To Employees Who Died in the First World War.



The Company helped to purchase the Staverton Reading Rooms in 1920.



One Ton Morris 'trolley' with Driver Sid Bunting 1920's.

Below - Staverton Factory's first Milk Collection Lorry Fleet, 3 Ton Albions 1920.



The vehicles had open cabs, were painted dark service green, had two paraffin side lamps and cost £993 for the pair. Consideration was given to buying two 1 ton Ford 'trolleys' later in the year but the factory decided against because they were too expensive, £450 each, and their one ton capacity would not be suitable for their operation. A third 3 ton Albion was purchased at the end of the year, for £725, and milk collections in Nestle's own lorries began, initially with two small collections a day from local farms. The lorries were used quite often, and most dinner times, to collect milk from Trowbridge station as well as take goods to Holt station for despatch, but most of the farm collections were still being carried out by hauling contractors. With the rigours of the war years now at an end the Company decided to celebrate the Allied victory by giving every Staverton worker a £5 Victory bond and declaring a day's holiday for all on July 19th, 1919. Carnival parades were organised locally and the Factory Manager, Donald Rogers, and his wife, treated all the local children to a lavish tea in the village school room. Each was presented with a commemorative mug and sports and other celebrations followed afterwards for the rest of the village. The Company had always taken an interest in the community; most of the village worked at the factory then; and had, for a number of years, given donations to the church and other local organisations. To coincide with the victory celebrations the Company also provided half the cost of setting up the village Reading Rooms with a donation of £50 to purchase a surplus Red Cross hut which was erected in a field not far from the factory. By the end of the year most of the enlisted men had returned from military service, the demand for Admiralty milk had eased off and the total volume for the year had dropped to 271,000 cases.

The restrictions and difficulties of the last five years began to ease in 1920 and the factory slowly got back to normal. The cost of living had rocketed during the war years and the Company had found it necessary to increase the wages of all employees by an average 15%. Foremen were now receiving £5.50 a week, senior office staff up to £38 a month, skilled operators £4.50 a week and every employee was granted a week's paid holiday a year. The pressures on the Factory Manager throughout the turbulent war years had been recognised by the Company who were now in a position to enlist some help for the 'exhausted' Donald Rogers. Several trainee managers had assisted in the early months of 1920 and one of them, Anthony Crick, was officially appointed Assistant Factory Manager in June. As with all Senior Nestle Manager positions he was entitled to a Company house and within a few weeks of his appointment was moved into a property in Avenue Road, Trowbridge, recently bought for £910. Further milk collection lorries were purchased throughout the year and a fleet of twelve had been acquired by the end of 1920 duly placed in the charge of Charles Endru, the garage Foreman. The loss of the eleven factory men who fell in the Great War, seven of whom lived in the village, prompted the Company to commemorate their great sacrifice and a donation was made to Staverton Church to help pay for a village war memorial which would be inscribed on a brass tablet and placed on St. Paul's eagle lectern. Some of the factory men who had died in the trenches had been Methodist worshippers and to ensure that the Company wasn't showing bias to one particular religious faith a similar donation was given to the village Wesleyan Chapel.

Signs of a trade recession had been appearing throughout 1920, due to a fall in consumer spending power, and by the end of the year it had begun to affect the Company's business to the extent that production had to be cut back and 35 women workers discharged through shortage of work. Eleven more workers were laid off in January 1921 and a further 21, all girls, were given notice to leave by the end of the month. Demand had dropped right off and to try and prevent more lay offs the factory's working hours were temporarily cut to 40. Since the end of the war raw material costs had risen sharply with sugar and tinsplate prices up 400%, coal prices up 500% and because of this the Company was beginning to experience financial difficulties. The position had become so serious by the end of the year that urgent measures were needed to reduce costs and all employees were asked to take a pay cut. Staff salaries would be cut by 10%, shop floor wages by a penny an hour, saving £280 a month, and overtime reduced saving a further £180 a month. Six men and seven more women were discharged reducing the work force to 250 and saving another £116 a month. Volumes for the year had dropped to 269,000 cases and estimates for 1922 were even more depressing with manufacture reduced by at least 30%. The difficulties continued through 1922 with the Company facing a drop of 20% in sales creating surplus capacity and a high level of finished stocks in the warehouse. Shop floor wages averaged £3 a week for men, £1.80 for women, the working week was now 48 hours and overtime was being paid at time and a quarter up to 54 hours and time and a half for any hours worked over this. Volumes for the year were worse than expected with only 136,000 cases being produced, half the amount of the previous year.

Back Row:
 Jack Whitmarsh
 Annie Pain
 Frances Purnell
 Albert Stevens
 Miss Burton
 Farm Inspector
 Kathleen Wells
 Vic Ryan
 Walter Hart

Middle:
 Richard Wells
 Assistant
 Manager
 Oscar Rogers
 Norman Osbourn
 Bert Lane

Front:
 Dorothy Wiggins
 Gladys Hale.



Staverton Factory Management and Office Staff 1929
 Below - Staverton started producing Sterilised Cream in 1930.

NET WEIGHT 6 OZS.

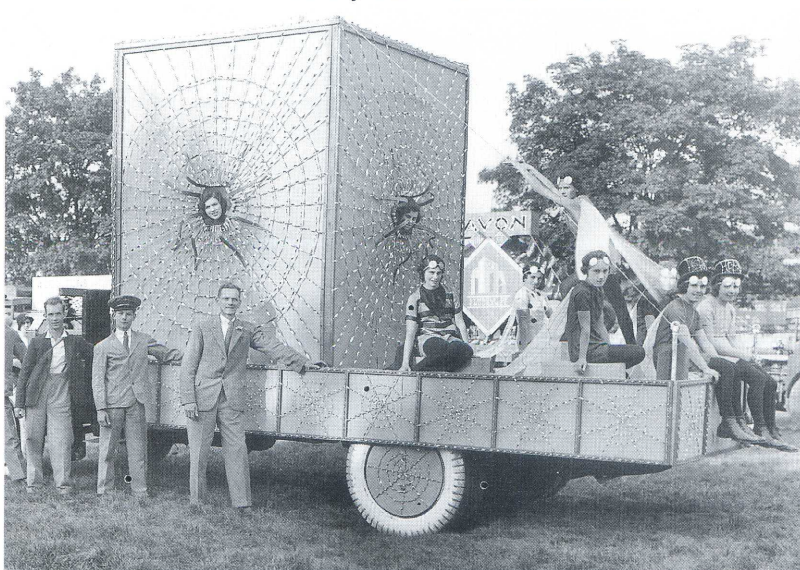
NESTLÉ'S
 PURE  THICK
CREAM
 MANUFACTURED FOR
NESTLÉ (SOUTH AFRICA) LIMITED
 275 SMITH STREET, DURBAN

PRODUCE OF ENGLAND

NESTLÉ'S

 The WORLD'S
 GREATEST DAIRY

Below - Factory Carnival Float 1930's.



James Homewood - Staverton
 Factory Manager 1930-1940.

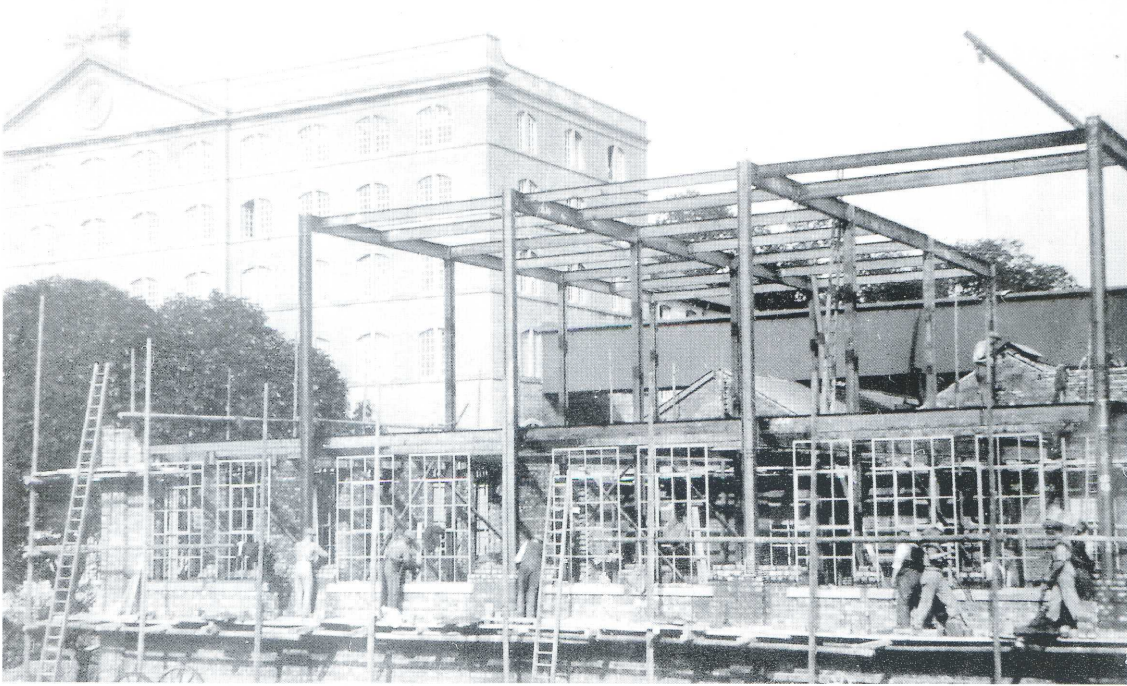
The situation improved slightly in 1923 with volumes reaching 236,000 cases and with it, an increase in the work force to 255. Several employees had been promoted to supervisory positions with Edward Watson now Foreman of the Wet Room, Arthur Stevens sub Foreman in the Filling Room and Harry Kemp in a similar role in the Sterilising Room. A small amount of butter continued to be produced, still supervised by Herbert Griffen, and the expansion of the lorry fleet operations required more help with the vehicle maintenance in the form of garage lad Cecil Horner. The economic situation fluctuated over the next few years with another depression in 1924 leading to production at Aylesbury and Salisbury factories being halted for a while. Staverton, however, managed to keep going but at a reduced rate and the labour force remained fairly stable although a few had to be laid off in slack periods. The wages and salaries reduction of 1921 had not been reinstated and senior and office staff were earning less in 1924 than they had been four years previously. Frank Brewer, the Chief Clerk, was being paid £36 a month, the Assistant Clerk Arthur Francis £33 a month and the female office clerks between £13 and £14 a month. In comparison with his staff, the Factory Manager Donald Rogers was very well paid on £105 a month whilst his assistant Anthony Crick was getting less than half this sum on £45 a month. Things improved slightly in 1925 with the work force increasing to 302 by September and volumes marginally up. A double blow came to the Company and the Factory during the year with the death of Fred Rogers in July followed three months later with the decease of Staverton's Chief Clerk Frank Brewer. Fred Rogers, the Staverton Factory Manager's father had started his career at Chippenham Factory, had managed the setting up and early running of Staverton Factory at the turn of the century and had been tireless in his efforts to ensure that both factories would successfully weather the storms and uncertainties of the early 20th century.

The factory was hit by milk supply, delivery and collection restrictions in the autumn of 1925 when serious outbreaks of foot and mouth disease swept through a number of local farms including the adjacent village farm where the herd of 70 milking cows had to be destroyed and burnt. Fresh milk intake was running at 4½ million gallons a year in the mid 1920's and all this supply was being made into finished products. A slump hit the factory again in the second half of 1927 leading to 39 women and 14 men being laid off through shortage of work and reducing the work force to 227, the lowest it had been since the First World War. The economic chaos that had been prevalent throughout the 1920's had affected most areas of British industry and successive governments had failed to find a solution to stabilise the see-saw effects that were giving so many of the nation's businesses extreme problems with production, exports, supply and work force stability. Since the end of the First World War Staverton Factory had been fortunate to keep going through these unsettling years in which the work force had experienced wage cuts, a fall in outputs, production levels lower than 1914, lay offs, the general strike of 1926 but also the occasional mini boom when there had been a surplus of milk. The traumas of the 1920's finally came to a head in late 1929 when the bubble inevitably burst and the world sank into the great depression triggered by a sudden upheaval in the American economy. Europe, struggling through the devastating effects of the Great War, had relied on the strong American economy for financial support and loans and when this flow of money abruptly dried up European economies began to collapse. Exports dropped off, foreign markets disappeared, there was a run on the pound and unemployment shot up to over 2½ million by the end of the year. The demand for milk products fell, in turn affecting exports and the factory's outputs dropped to 192,000 cases, lower than it had been for a number of years. Again, the factory was able to weather the storm and James Homewood took over as Factory Manager in 1930 coinciding with the introduction of tinned sterilised cream which effectively ended the butter making operation although a small amount was still being produced right up to the start of the Second World War. The cream, extracted from the milk during the skimmed milk process was initially produced in 11ozs. and 6ozs sizes and after filling, the cans were loaded into metal crates and placed in large static retorts where the sterilising process took place. After cooling, the cans were packed into boxes and placed in a hot room for 'seasoning'. When the two week incubation period was completed the tins of cream were examined by a team of girls before being finally labelled and packed. New manufacturing equipment was installed to cater for this increase in the factory's product range and an additional 665 cows had to be 'bought' to provide the extra milk for the planned 17,000 cases of Sterilised Cream initially proposed. The number of cows now supplying milk to the factory in the summer peak was over 6,400, an increase of 1,000 over previous years. The new product gave the factory a much needed boost as it struggled through the depression, helped to retain most of the work force and, although home markets were still depressed, the new Sterilised Cream was considered to have great export potential particularly to North America.

A new S type filler with double seamer was installed, the Tinshop was now operating seven rubbering machines with a capacity of 12,000 ends per hour and can bottoms were added on Torris Wold end seamers before being sent down the long corridor to the Filling Room. The boilerhouse, equipped with 2 Babcock and 2 Lancashire boilers, became the scene of a serious steam accident in July when the Robey engine compensating tank blew up, due to a jammed pressure valve, badly scolding the Engine Driver Fred Hutchings and an attendant Tinshop mechanic Reg Crowther. Both were hospitalised for several weeks and inspections by safety officials concluded that the valve had been fitted incorrectly by the installers and it was a miracle that it had not blown a long time ago.

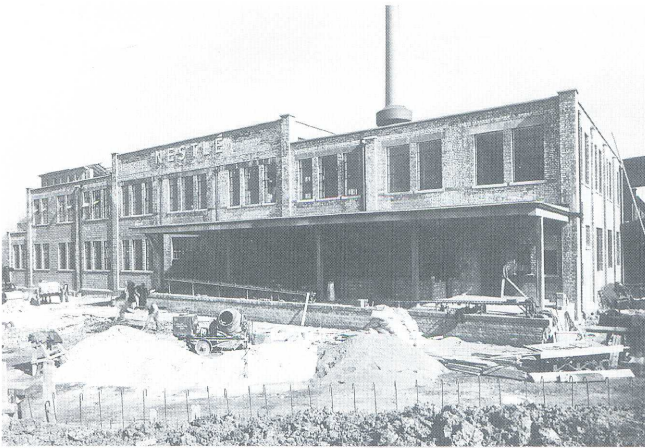
Despite the past difficulties with the business the Factory was still able to support local 'good causes' and towards the end of the year a substantial donation was made to the Royal United Hospital in Bath as well as smaller gifts towards the Trowbridge Hospital Carnival Fund. The factory regularly supported the local carnival by entering a colourful float, manned by staff and workers and also gave annual donations to other local organisations including the Salvation Army and the Hilperton and Trowbridge Nursing Associations. By 1932 the factory was manufacturing canned milk products in 7 different sizes as well as producing Cocoa tins in quarter, half and one lb sizes. Maximum can making capacity was 392 cases per hour (735,000 cases per year), the 7 presses capable of 69,000 ends per hour with the shears averaging 20 cuts a minute. The presses comprised a mixture of Cham, Adriance and WK machines and the ring fixers were a combination of Torris Wold, Bliss and Klinghammer. Optimum filling capacity was estimated at 628 cases per hour and 30,000 gallons of fresh milk was being handled per day in the peak summer months. The factory's steam generation was enhanced in May with the acquisition of another Babcock and Wilcox boiler, transferred from Aylesbury, and the boilerhouse was extended to accommodate it. The factory's power supply in the mid 1930's was provided by a 130hp Pollitt & Wigzell horizontal tandem condensing steam engine driving a 90Kw generator, a Robey high speed vertical engine coupled to a 50Kw generator, a Reavell high speed vertical engine linked to a Brown Boveri AG 55Kw generator and a 43hp Vortex water turbine, which for the most part, was totally ineffective. The Reavell engine was constantly breaking down and the water turbine was of little assistance for the reasons already described earlier. Problems were also being experienced with the Robey engine and generator, installed during the Great War years, its efficiency now so impaired that it needed a complete overhaul. By 1934 the work force averaged 320, two extra can sizes had been introduced and outputs had reached 700,000 cases helped by a reduction in the sale price of a 1d per tin in May. Panmen, the best paid factory operatives, were earning 7p an hour, labourers 5½p an hour, women over 21 3p an hour and young girls 2p an hour. The factory's milk collection lorry drivers, under Foreman John Morris, averaged £3 a week and Foremen's wages, which varied slightly by departments and status, were around £4 a week. George Gibbs, in charge of the Laboratory, did marginally better at £4.50 per week although junior Lab Assistants were some of the poorest paid workers with several on the lowest factory rate of 62p a week. William Weston was now called Labour Overseer directly responsible for the work force under Foremen Ernie Hillman (Tinshop), Frank Hinton (Packing), Syd Wainwright (Filling), William Purnell (Sterilising) and William Pullen (Receiving Room). Frank Beaven looked after the Boilerhouse, Archie Hillcoat the Fitting Shops, with Donald Sartain and Arthur Stevens in charge of the Sweetened and Unsweetened filling lines.

With the uncertainties of the depression years now behind them the factory's business was steadily growing and plans were formulated in 1934 to modernise and expand the condensery. Some of the old mill buildings on the south side of the millrace were demolished to make way for a brand new red brick manufacturing block which was erected at the front of the site and completed in 1935. All the manufacturing operations were moved into this custom built two storey block which was situated adjacent to the Tinshop, erected in 1914, therefore making the delivery of the tins to the filling area much more efficient. Machinery was modernised including the provision of new stainless steel vacuum pans to replace the old copper variety, one of which had been in operation since the start of the factory in 1897. Updated labelling and packing equipment was installed and fiberite cases introduced to replace the old wooden packing boxes which were gradually phased out except for certain small export orders. The new process block consisted of milk receiving dock, cream separating room, filling rooms, sterilising room, packing room, hot room, sugar boiling room, label store and turbine room all arranged on the ground floor. Located at the rear of the new building were the case board printing room, timber stores, old mahogany store and small warehouse.

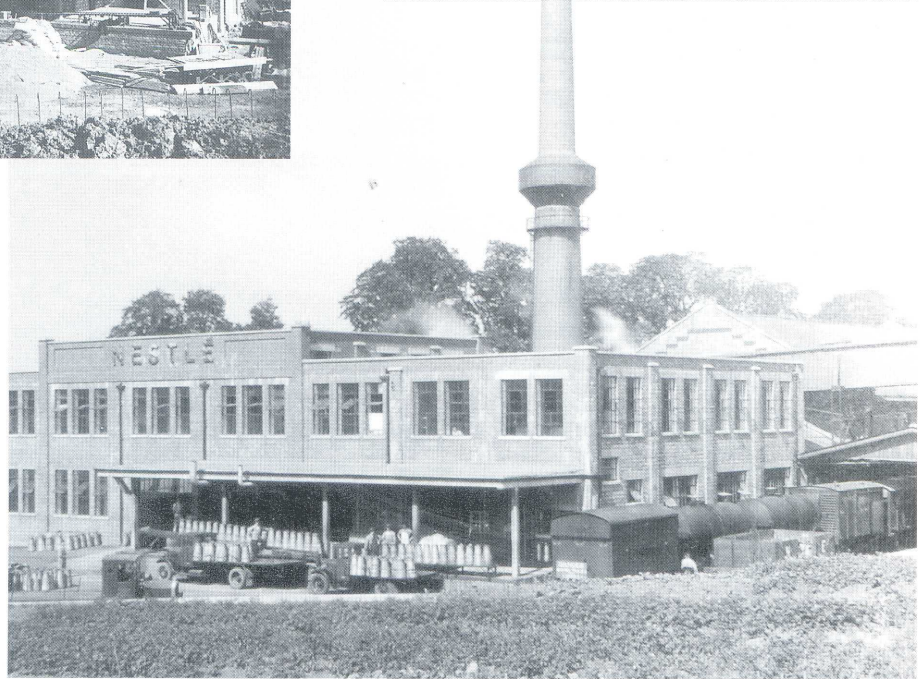
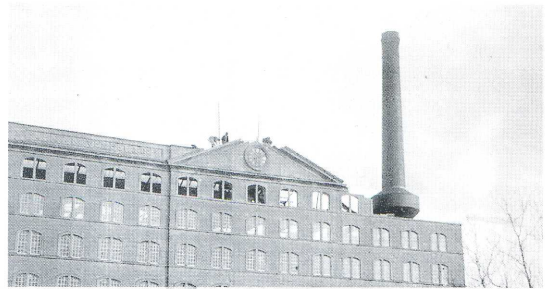


Workmen building thr Red Brick Process Block 1934.

Blackford's start to demolish the Old Mill.



Above:
The New Process Block
nearing completion 1935.



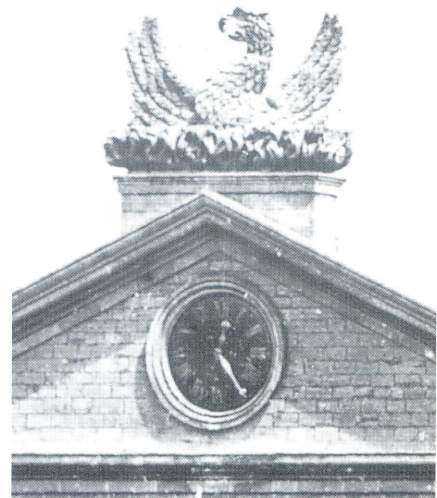
The New Process Block with milk lorries unloading and rail wagons on the
Factory Sidings 1936.



Above and Below - The Old Mill Building being demolished down to two storeys 1935.



Below - The Factory Clock awaiting removal.



The Stone Pheonix and Clock which adorned the pediment of the Old Mill.

The upper floor contained a tank room for storing fresh milk, sugar room, laboratory and processing room where the new stainless steel vacuum pans were installed. When the new block was ready for operations the majestic old six storey mill building, which had stood proudly over the river for more than a hundred years, was demolished down to two storeys. Blackfords of Calne carried out the work, the first task being to remove the large stone pheonix which crowned the pediment of the old mill building and which had been placed there in 1825 to commemorate the rebuilding after the disastrous fire of 1824 which almost destroyed the whole structure. Below this considerable sculpture a large factory clock was situated in the front apex above the top storey and, with the pheonix, was also removed by Blackfords, sent to their builder's yard in Calne and in later years could not be traced. After the demolition was completed the remaining two storeys were converted into the main offices, cloakrooms and mess room on the first floor with maintenance workshops, tinsmith's, carpenter's, mason's, painter's shop, general stores and churn stores on the ground floor. A laundry and cycle shed filled the remaining space and a short corridor connected the old reduced mill building with the new process block. The garage, located in old mill outbuildings which previously occupied the site where the new block now stood, was re-sited on a vacant area of land behind the rear of the Tinshop.

This first major expansion of the Condensery also included the installation of the long planned railway siding, first proposed in 1916, and the factory could now receive milk supplies in rail tankers as well as many other raw materials such as tinplate from South Wales and coal from local collieries. The siding branched off the main Great Western line at the rear of the factory and split into several separate tracks which serviced the process and warehouse block, the Tinshop and the boilerhouse. Simple points were installed to control the direction of rail wagons and the two lines that ran right to the front of the factory were terminated by large sets of bumpers. Shunting of the wagons on the new siding was originally carried out by the factory horse but this arrangement turned out to be very short lived as the poor animal was 'invalided' out of service after only two days with a nail in its foot! Besides the delivery of fresh milk and raw materials, finished goods and tinscrap were despatched out of the factory on this siding over the next three decades.

In December 1935 the Company changed its name to Nestle Milk Products Ltd., and the Anglo-Swiss name, connected with Nestle since the merger of 1905, would be dropped and no longer grace the Company's letterheads and product packaging. Production had been slowly increasing since the heady days of the early 1930's and, by 1936, 7,794 cows owned by 303 local farmers were supplying milk to the Condensery, most of it now being collected by Staverton's fleet of eleven lorries each making several pick-ups a day. A couple of outside contractors, Read's and Gay Brothers, reinforced the haulage operation and milk was now being collected in 10 gallon churns and a few 8 galloners which were gradually replacing the original heavy conical 17 gallon churns. Staverton's lorry fleet had been updated and now comprised 4 x 4 ton Dennis's, 1 x 3 ton Commer, 3 x 2 ton Commers and a 1½ ton Morris. The advent of the new process block and the disuse of the old mill building for manufacturing necessitated the removal of the old ineffectual Vortex water turbine and this was replaced by a new Oerlikon steam turbine in 1936 which was installed on the ground floor of the new manufacturing block in a room behind the milk receiving dock.

The work force had increased to 255 by 1937 and fresh milk intake was exceeding 5 million gallons annually, 378,000 gallons of this subsequently being despatched. Bert Price became the new Factory Overseer and Bert Lane, who had joined the Company in 1910 and had previously been in charge of the stores, was appointed Chief Clerk. A unique event took place at the factory in September 1937 when 85 employees throughout the Company were invited to attend the first long service awards presentations. The event, hosted by the Company's Managing Director J.W. Gwynn, included 30 men and 8 women from Staverton whose service ranged from 39 years to 25, several of whom had started their careers at the factory when it opened in 1897. Men received a silver tankard, the women a silver clock and each employee in attendance was presented with a testimonial certificate.

War clouds were gathering over Europe by 1938 and during the months of uncertainty prior to the outbreak of the Second World War the Company began to draw up contingency plans to protect the business from the ravages of the long expected conflict.



Above - The Old Mill being Demolished 1935. The New Process Block and Tinshop can be seen on the right.



Right - Work being carried out to the Millrace & Bridges 1936.



Staverton Management and Office Staff 1936.

Back: George Lovelock, Annie Pain, Walter Hart, Albert Stevens, -----(?), Betty Watkins, Jack Whitmarsh.

Middle: Phil Bryant, Jim Price, Richard Wells, James Homewood, Norman Osbourn, Bert Lane, -----(?).

Front: Glad Hitchins, Nancy Bleasedale

In September, volunteers were sought to attend ARP meetings at local centres where they would be instructed in first aid, anti gas, decontamination and air raid precautions. Faced with the threat of massive air attacks on London, it was decided to re-locate Head Office and plans were drawn up to disperse its various departments to rural condenseries such as Staverton, Ashbourne, Chippenham, Aylesbury and Salisbury. The old office block, used only as a churn stores in the 1930's, was redecorated and rewired in anticipation of the move by a section of Head Office if war was declared. The Gay family, who had been living in the end 'cottage' of the old office block were rehoused and part of the 'accommodation' was taken over by the Nightwatchman to increase the factory's security. In August 1939, just before the outbreak of war, The Accounting and Sales sections of Head Office were evacuated to Staverton and accommodated in the refurbished old office block and part of the main office building. The Company's Managing Director, J.W. Gwynn, also joined his Head Office staff for a while and the Company's business was able to continue operations in the relative safety and quiet of the Wiltshire countryside. At the start of hostilities the Government introduced wartime regulations which affected the whole of British industry and all milk products would now be purchased by the Ministry of Food and reallocated by priority. Some of these first priorities were to build up war stocks, supply the rapidly expanding armed forces and provide for a nation about to embark on many years of hardship and food shortages. The factory was immediately switched onto a war footing and the manufacture of its milk products became essential to the war effort. Total output for 1939 was 886,000 cases including trial production runs of Nestrovite, a vitamised liquid preparation based on sweetened condensed milk, and a product called Triomix produced from Manucol ICS and icing sugar. Wages averaged £3.15 a week for men, £1.75 a week for women and some small volumes of sweetened and unsweetened milk had been filled into 1 gallon and 1/2 gallon tins.

With invasion a real threat in May 1940 plans were made to recruit and train a home defence force and, again, volunteers were sought amongst the Staverton work force to serve in this 'makeshift' army. Many factory men and some Head Office personnel came forward and, after being sworn in at Trowbridge Police Station, were formed into two squads of Local Defence Volunteers, the forerunner of the later Home Guard. By the end of July Staverton's 'army' was undergoing training in 'squad drill and musketry' and were allowed to fire ten rounds on the miniature rifle range at the local drill hall. The LDV became the Home Guard in August and the factory's two squads, now 34 and 35, had 'passed out' in basic weapons drill and had been fitted with uniforms and boots. A guardroom and armoury had been set up in the factory and was situated on the ground floor of the main building, near the present day Reception area, and kitted out with temporary beds. Staverton's fire fighting teams practised once a week and were well versed about what to do in the event of a factory air raid warning. Bomb shelters had now been completed and, in the event of an attack, the fire and first aid teams would report to the girls shelter, mens shelter, yard shelter and boilerhouse shelter to deal with any casualties.

Ron Brewer took over as Factory Manager in 1940 when the work force ranged from over 400 in the peak to 226 in the winter months. Sterilised cream manufacture was suspended for the duration of the war as every drop of milk available was needed to produce sweetened condensed and evaporated milk. Production had topped one million cases by the end of the year and to produce this level of volume the factory had used 8,638 tons of coal and 460 million gallons of water. Training of the Home Guard intensified towards the end of 1940 with regular parades under the instruction of George Gibbs, Reg Moore and Sgt. Taylor and practice firings took place with Lee-Enfield .303 rifles at the Bradford-on-Avon ranges. A notice to all Nestle factories in October 1940 described the bombing of one of the Company's factory's power house, not named at the time for security reasons, and enclosed a letter from a casualty of this enemy action who, although seriously injured, was now making a good recovery in hospital. Staverton's Manager, Ron Brewer, summed up the nation's patriotic fervour of the time by adding to the notice "we think everybody will be interested to read the above letter which typifies the spirit that will lead us to victory". From the early days of the war Staverton's work force began to contribute to the National Farthing League, the British Red Cross Penny a Week Fund and a collection in September 1940 raised £11 for the West Wilts Spitfire Fund. The factory Home Guard continued to train hard and regularly practised their defence, patrolling and reconnaissance tactics. To help repel an invasion, rows of pillboxes had been hastily constructed by the military in the early days of the war and these formed defensive lines along rivers, canals and railways. The GHQ line ran right through Staverton and the factory's Home Guard unit used some of these strong points to set up observation posts. Nightly patrols were carried out to look for enemy paratroopers, all bridges were guarded and sometimes road blocks were constructed and manned by the factory's intrepid defenders.

In November 1940 the Staverton detachment became part of 4th battalion the Wiltshire Home Guard and had started receiving American .300 rifles shipped over from the United States. Further reorganisation in early 1941 made the detachment part of B Company 4th Wilts and in April the training introduced the throwing of the Mills Bomb, a type of crude grenade. Several exercises took place, first with the Holt detachment carrying out a mock attack on the factory and then the combined Holt and Staverton platoons 'invading' Bradford-on-Avon. Factory Manager, Ron Brewer, a World War One veteran who became a Lieutenant in the Home Guard, displayed a clever piece of cunning prior to this exercise when he displayed a notice in the condensery asking that "any of our members living in Bradford having, or who can discreetly obtain, any knowledge of Bradford outposts or fortified positions this side of the town should report to the undersigned or Sergeants Gibbs or Lees". This action indicated that he was determined that his factory unit should win the forthcoming 'battle'.

The railway siding was in constant use during the war years bringing in surplus milk supplies from all over the country, for manufacturing into products, and delivering essential materials such as coal, sugar and tinplate. Limited storage space at the factory meant that the build up of finished stocks had to be accommodated in outside stores and many local farm buildings were utilised and turned into temporary 'warehouses'. Some of these farms included Staverton Farm, Smallbrook Farm and Maxcroft Farm, all in the village, and several others in Holt and Hilperton. The canal wharf warehouse at Bradford-on-Avon was used for a while as were buildings in Yerbury Street, Trowbridge, Greenland Mills in Bradford-on-Avon and Semington Kennels. Many of these stores were still being used long after the war had ended and were finally given up in the mid 1950's. The increased level of manufacturing pushed the work force up to 370 in 1941 and wages had risen to £3.60 a week for men and £2.10 for women. Staverton's Home Guard unit continued their 'war games' and by May American Thompson machine guns, the famous 'Tommy gun', were becoming available for issue to Home Guard units and throughout the summer, the No.7 Nestle platoon used the 22 rifles in its possession for practice shoots at Bradford ranges under the expert tuition of Sgt. Major Paget of the Wilts Regiment. Platoon NCO's were officially appointed in August 1941 with Corporals Whitmarsh, Lyke, Lloyd, Vezey, Potter, Harrison and Johnson sewing two stripes on their uniforms and Messrs. Malyn, Barnes, Drewett, Culverhouse and the Norris brothers becoming Lance Corporals. Training continued in earnest through the Autumn, field exercises took place with respirators and steel helmets being worn and instruction was given on the use of the Blacker Bombard, a primitive form of mortar. At the end of the year the Nestle Home Guard were alerted to look out for escaped prisoners of war and the whole factory was reminded about the blackout precautions which made Foremen and Chargehands responsible for drawing the curtains in all departments and making sure all the outside doors were kept shut.

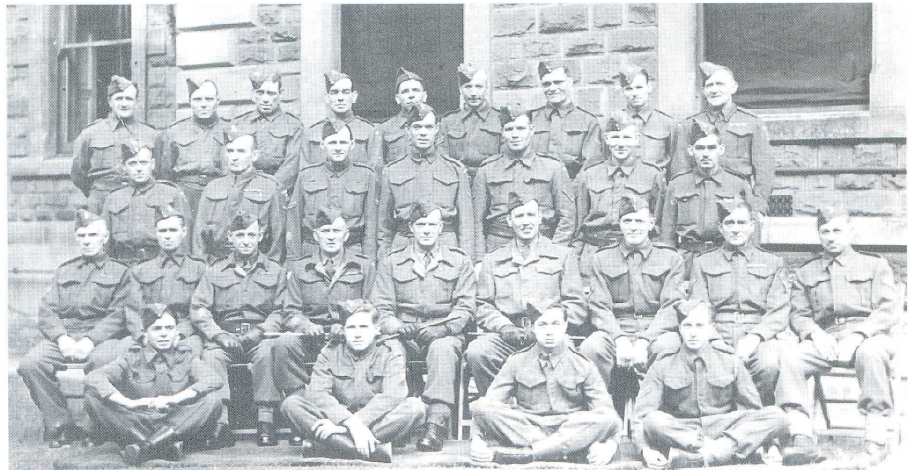
In February 1942 enrolment in the Home Guard became compulsory for men between 17 and 51 and a month later Sten guns were issued to some units to replace the American Tommy guns which were badly needed to equip the rapidly expanding regular army. The realities of war came very close to Staverton on several occasions when bombs were dropped only a short distance from the factory. A stray bomb landed on a nearby stretch of the Kennet & Avon Canal making a larger crater in one of the banks. Whaddon was laced with incendiaries and Holt was attacked by an enemy plane fleeing from a raid on Bath. Production had reached a million cases by 1942, total milk intake was nearly 5 million gallons and the work force remained about the same level as the previous two years. All tinscrap was despatched by rail and sent to collection depots under the National Salvage Scheme and further outside stores were rented to accommodate the growing amounts of war stocks and raw materials. The only tinned milk products being produced at the moment were sweetened condensed and unsweetened but the factory had also started to get involved in the packing of rolled oats. Household milk powder and condensed milk in tubes, 75,000 of these being packed in 1942. Factory men of service age were being called up to serve in the armed forces, some women were being drafted into the nursing volunteer schemes and the vacancies were being filled by temporary older men and women and sometimes factory pensioners who were recalled to help out. Staverton's employees continued to respond favourably to appeals for financial help with war causes and factory collections were given to the Bath Air Raid Relief Fund and to a scheme to provide the Red Army with mobile X Ray units. Arrangements to supply the factory with British Restaurant Meals, from the cooking centre in Holt, were agreed in mid 1942 and the Staverton work force could now enjoy a cooked meal on the premises for 4p. The Nestle Home Guard platoon became more and more proficient as the war progressed and the battalion now had available such awesome weapons as the Northover Projector, the Spigot Mortar, Lewis Gun and the Smith Gun.



Company 25 Year's Service Presentation held at Staverton Factory 1937



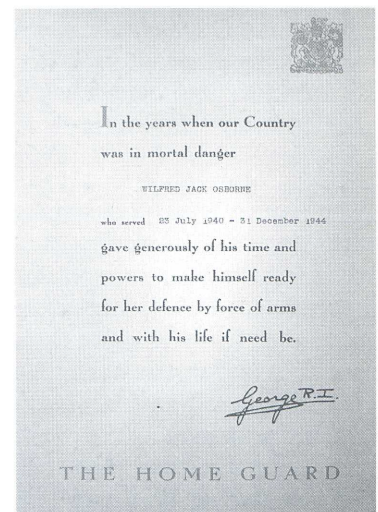
J.W.Gwynn, Company Managing Director 1940.



A Nestle Home Guard Detachment 1941.



The Old Office Block which accommodated some of Head Office during the war years.



Nightly patrols continued and, apart from the odd 'fright' at dead of night, the platoon's soldiering skills were never really tested in anger. Ex Home Guard members can recall a few hilarious moments from those tense days such as the night when a patrol out searching for escaped POW's had just returned to the guardhouse in the factory and were unloading live rounds from their rifles when one of the platoon accidentally fired his weapon. The bullet smashed through the old iron stove in the room, ricocheted off the wall dislodging a large chunk of concrete on its way. The lump of masonry fell to the floor hitting the Nightwatchman's sleeping dog but failing to rouse it. Fortunately, nobody was injured in the incident but jokes about Nestle's 'highly alert' guard dog lasted the war out. Later, during an exercise to 'capture' Atworth, strange noises were heard coming from a small outbuilding on the outskirts of the village. Fearing that the 'enemy' were lurking inside, the intrepid Bill Gliddon crept up to the shed with rifle poised and threw open the door. He was, however, forced to make a hasty retreat after discovering that the 'enemy' was really a very irate lady who had been peacefully sitting on her outside closet! On another occasion a patrol was moving stealthily up the Holt road at dead of night when they heard loud tapping noises, like weapons being cocked, coming from a field up ahead. Everyone dived for cover fearing they had run into a group of enemy paratroopers and, after a whispered debate on what they should do next, a very reluctant 'scout' was gingerly sent forward to draw the enemy fire. There were huge sighs of relief on hearing the news that the enemy force was merely a horse in the field tapping its itching hoof against a tree.

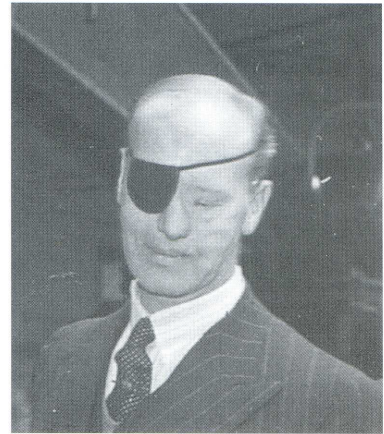
The gap between men's and women's wages began to narrow in 1943 when, for the first time, the pay rise given to female employees exceeded the award given to their male colleagues. Men were now earning an average £4.45 per week with the women being paid £3.20 per week. Numbers of employees remained around 350 and due to call ups and retirements several new Foremen were appointed to take the places of those who had left. Walt Vezey had taken charge of the Milk Dock, Bert Lloyd had become the Warehouse Foreman, Graham Hale supervised the Sterilising operations and Mrs F Beaven became the first Forewomen to be appointed in the factory's 46 year history and put in charge of the Condensed milk filling and packing lines. Coal supplies to fuel the factory's five boilers were totalling 7,000 tons a year with over 5,300 tons of this total being delivered in rail wagons due to road transport and petrol supplies being in short supply because of wartime restrictions. Shortages of other materials began to affect the condensery and by April 1943 replacement tyres for the factory's lorry fleet had become virtually unobtainable. The factory management, concerned at the seriousness of the situation, issued instructions to lorry drivers "to take the utmost care in driving techniques, always ensure that tyre pressures are correct, use brakes judiciously, avoid quick acceleration and take corners with every care". More special packing jobs were taken on by the factory including the continuation of Nestrovite, which contained Vitapan, ascorbic acid, aneurine and condensed milk; and dried egg powder. British Red Cross parcels, for POWs, were being packed together with army ration packs and Pacific compo packs which contained processed meat, fish, egg, jam, vegetable salad and baked beans.

The fortunes of war had started to turn in the Allies favour as 1944 dawned and final flurry of activity for the Home Guard came in June when all units were placed on stand-to in case of enemy counter measures during the D Day landings. These, of course, did not materialise and as the Allies pressed for final victory in Europe, the factory's Home Guard unit could at last relax. When the war ended the following year Staverton's courageous part time defenders were no longer required and the unit was finally disbanded in December 1945.

The factory's own canteen arrangements were introduced in June 1944, the price of a cooked meal being 10p 'exclusive of extras', and the British Restaurant Meals Service that had supplied the condensery from the Holt kitchens over the last two years was no longer required and the service ceased at the end of the month. Head Office, apart from a short respite in 1940, had remained at Staverton for most of the war and some of its personnel stayed on after the war's end and made Wiltshire their home. Staverton's contribution to the war effort had been considerable, not only in providing vast quantities of tinned milk and other products, but also the employee's generous collections for war causes which included a total of £1,350 to the Red Cross Penny a Week Fund and over £1,400 towards war weapons appeals. Just like the events of the First World War, three decades earlier, many factory men had been called up for military service during 1939 and 1945 and the factory management now looked forward to their early return.



Packing Australian Food Parcels 1948.



Ron Brewer, Staverton's Factory Manager 1940-1960.



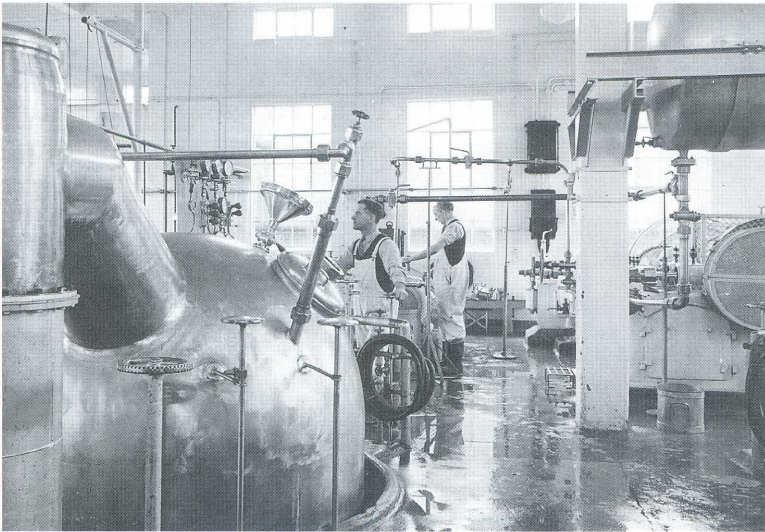
The Duchess of Gloucester greets the Staverton Wokforce 1948.

Packing Food Parcels 1948



Sub Post Office in the Factory 1948





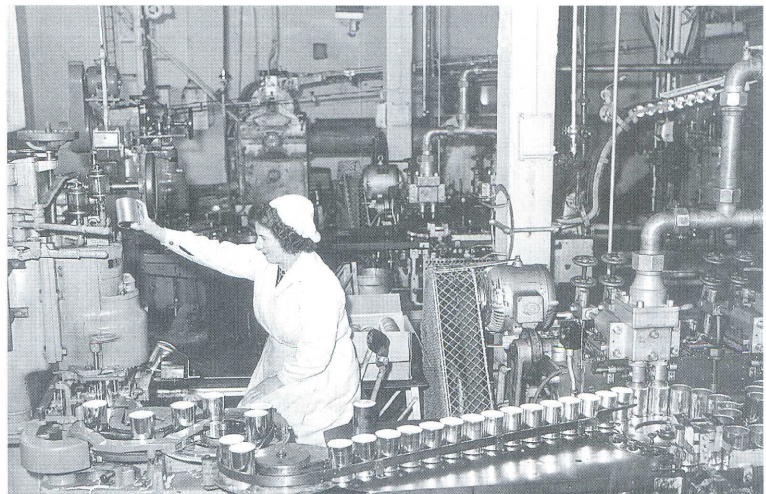
Process Floor with Vacuum Pan.



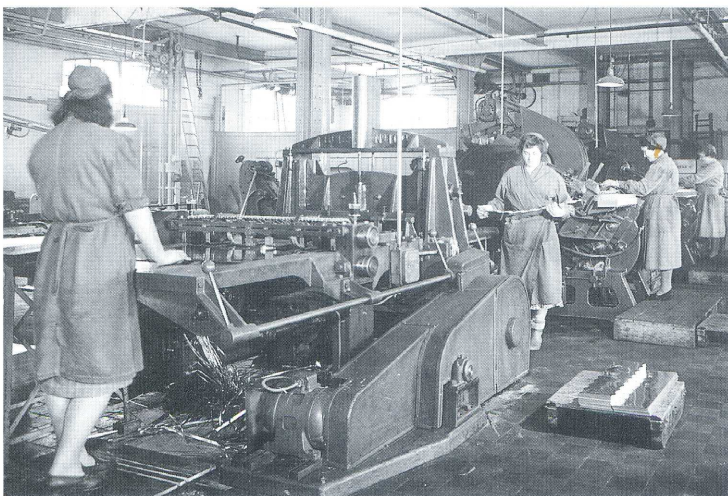
Packing Ideal Milk 1953.



Girls on labelling Line 1953.



Ideal Milk Filling Machine 1953.



Tinshop 1953.

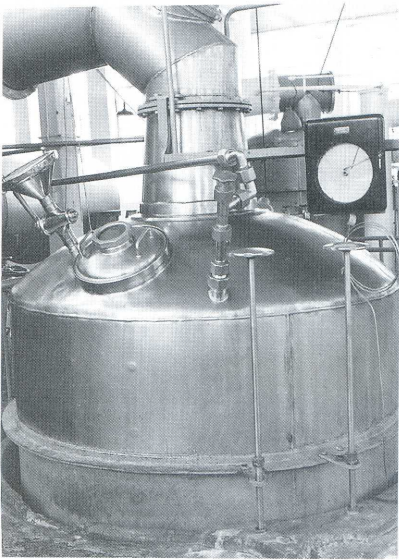


New Warehouse being built alongside the Factory Railway Siding 1950.

Britain's economic situation in the post war years was nowhere near as devastating as the decade after the First World War and although raw materials and food remained in short supply into the early 1950's the demand for milk products and fresh milk was maintained. The factory's production remained around the one million cases a year level and the work force, increased to cope with the high volume of work during the war years, was only marginally reduced in 1946. Workers wages had increased significantly during the war years and were now 30% higher than they had been in 1939. Female employees had fared even better than the men and had enjoyed a 50% increase in their wages since the outbreak of war and this had helped close the considerable gap that had existed right from the factory's start up in the late 19th century. From 1946 Staverton began producing tin ends for Chippenham factory, Jack Whitmarsh had taken over as Labour Overseer and Alfie Earl had become the factory Chemist. Milk intake remained around 5 million gallons a year but despatched milk had increased dramatically reducing the amount available for manufacturing into finished products. Mens' wages increased again to 9p an hour, womens to 6p an hour based on a 44 hour week, factory pensioners were receiving £48 a year and shop floor workers were now taking 10 days paid holiday annually. Production volumes dropped to just over 500,000 cases in 1947 and the work force had to be reduced to 227, the level it had been twenty years earlier. The main reason for this drop in outputs was the considerable increase in despatched milk which was now running at 2½ million gallons a year, nearly half the total fresh milk intake. The railway siding remained busy with nearly 1,300 rail wagon deliveries, over 800 of these bringing in coal for the boilerhouse. Cocoa and coffee tins were being made in the Tinshop and packing of Australian Food Parcels commenced towards the end of the year. The Australian 'Food for Britain' scheme allowed ex patriots living 'down under' to send much needed provisions to their hard pressed relatives back home and this could be done by paying 50p into the controlling office in Sydney accompanied by an addressed label to the recipient in the UK. Surplus food supplies, including honey, dripping and syrup, were shipped in bulk from New South Wales and made up into parcels in a specially set up packing operation at the factory. The completed parcels, with pre-addressed labels, were conveyed to a sub Post Office situated in the factory warehouse from where they were despatched to their grateful recipients all over the country. The Duchess of Gloucester, who had taken a great interest in and supported the scheme, honoured Staverton's involvement in the project with a special visit to the factory in March 1948 where she watched the parcel packing in operation and spent several hours talking to the work force. By the end of the year over 422,000 food parcels had been despatched and the operation was planned to continue throughout the following year.

Besides the normal tin sizes for the processed milk, the factory was making cans for Nescafe, Nestea, Cocoa, Honey, Dripping and Arobon in the late 1940's and by the end of 1949 over 816,000 Australian Food Parcels had been packed at Staverton. The factory's football team, which had successfully competed in the local leagues in the 1920's and 30's was reformed after the war and resumed their activities in the Trowbridge & District League under the captaincy of Bill Gliddon. The club, based at the Kings Arms public house, was run by Secretary Ernie Potter and Treasurer Cec Jacobs, played in a field at the top of the village and enjoyed enough support to also run a reserve team. Other Company social events resumed at the end of the 1940's and at the Hayes Gala Day held in 1950 a Staverton Press operator, Iris Brewer, won the Company beauty contest, the prize being a beauty culture course with cosmetics firm Yardleys. During the 1950 event 35 Staverton employees won prizes, mostly in the gardening competitions. Staverton factory personnel continued to support the Hayes annual event throughout the 1950's and 60's and many Staverton names were added to the long list of prize winners.

Bert Griffen was promoted to Tinshop Foreman in 1950 and Len Wells, the son of Factory Engineer Richard Wells, was given the Foreman's job in the Fitting Shop. This appointment, however, had ironical overtones as shortly after he took up his new position his father died and Len was further promoted to Factory Engineer in his place. Richard Wells had joined Anglo-Swiss in 1900, had been made Maintenance Overseer in 1912 and had recently completed 50 years service. Len was immediately involved in factory extensions when a small warehouse was added to the rear of the red brick process block and designed with low platforms on its southern side to cater for rail wagon deliveries and despatches. In 1951, the factory's maintenance department employed 34 craftsmen including two Tinsmiths, a Carpenter, Masons, a Painter, Turbine Operators and two Electricians. Archie Hillcoat was in charge of a team of four Tinshop fitters and Bill Fry was Chargehand of the Boilerhouse and its nine stokers. Pension payments were increased again in 1952 to £66 a year and one of the latest recipients was Harry Beaven who had just retired at the age of 71 having completed 50 years service.



Stainless Steel Vacuum Pan.



Factory Floods 1960's.



'Miss Staverton' Contest 1960's.



Indoor Sports Winners receive their Trophies 1960's



Staverton regularly won the Worth Snooker Trophy. Robin Jones & Mick Osbourne receive it from Tutbury's Charlie Fearn at Aylesbury in 1970.



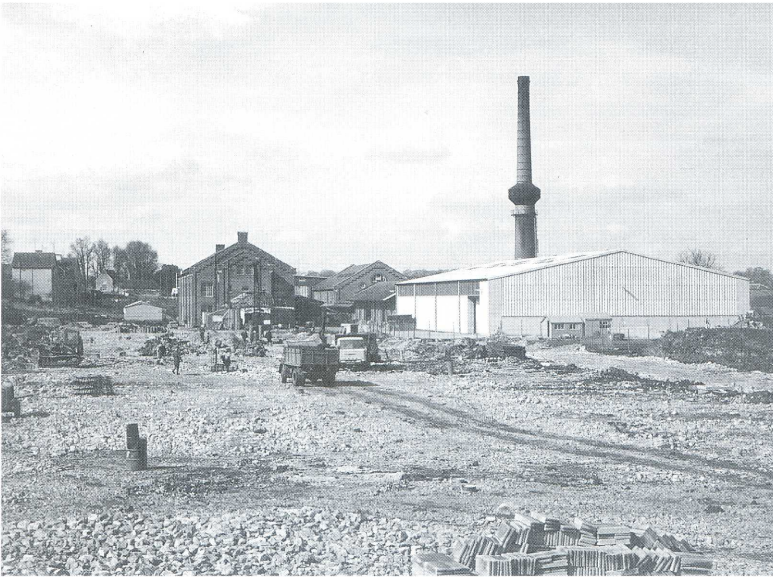
Mr & Mrs R.A. Wilson, Harold Ives & Eric Evers (Show Secretary) admire the Dahlia display at the Staverton Factory Flower Show 1974.

Harry came from a long line of Beavens associated with the factory starting with his father-in-law who had been caretaker for Hargreaves in the cloth mill days and continued in a similar role when Anglo-Swiss took over the factory in 1897. James Beaven, Harry's father, was also one of the first Staverton residents to be employed in the condensery when it started up and worked as a Panman until 1927.

Outputs dropped to 443,000 cases in 1953 and the work force stood at 270. Further changes came to the supervisory structure with Arthur Harrison becoming Filling Room Foreman, Bert Ransome Maintenance Foreman, to replace the recently promoted Len Wells and Eric Morris was put in charge of the factory's lorry fleet. Major alterations were made to the factory's frontage in 1953 when the high wall surrounding the site, a legacy from the old woollen mill days, was reduced to low level and topped with iron railings. At the same time extensive repairs were carried out to the bridge arches that channel the millrace under the road to rejoin the river at the front of the factory. 1954 was a better year for the factory with volumes increasing to 690,000 cases and the work force growing to nearly 300 in the peak period. Wages had risen to £7.40 a week for men and £4.20 a week for women over 21. Filling capacity was now estimated at 347 tins per minute with sterilising capacity for unsweetened and cream at 279 tins per minute. An Anderson Barngrover Rotary Steriliser was used to process the tins of Ideal Milk and two static retorts handled the sterilised cream process. The three main packing lines could label up to 800 tins per minute and tin making capacity was 415 tins a minute on mainly Bliss and NAS equipment. The boilerhouse could generate 48,000 lbs of steam per hour and the farmers milk was now being collected in predominately 8 gallon churns although a few 10 galloners were still in use. Production continued to increase in the 1950's and totalled over 800,000 cases in 1955. The work force stood at 314 in September but dropped back to 256 by the end of the year when the 'flush' was over. Twenty one personnel made up the main office staff and the average weekly hours worked by men, including overtime, was 57 with women and girls averaging 42 hours. Twenty one part timers were included in the work force total each working around 21 hours per week. Fresh milk intake, some of it still by rail tanker, had reached 8¼ million gallons by 1956 with 1¼ million gallons of this subsequently being despatched. Outputs for the year totalled 863,000 cases of which 170,000 were exports. Nearly half this volume was being produced as Ideal Milk, 33% of it as Sterilised Cream, Sweetened Condensed had fallen to 18% of the total filled and a small amount of skimmed made up the balance.

The factory had gone through a period of reorganisation in the first half of the 1950's and by 1957 all milk processing was being done on two vacuum pans, one for Unsweetened Milk with a capacity of 1375 gallons per hour, the other for Sweetened Condensed capable of 875 gallons per hour and the two cream separators could handle 725 gallons of milk an hour. The old office block, a hive of activity in the war years, stood empty except for a couple of small offices and a bicycle shed. Production levels and work force numbers remained fairly constant in the latter part of the 1950's and into the early 1960's. Ron Brewer, the Factory Manager, since 1940, retired in 1960 and his place was taken by Tim Lester who only remained in the post for a year before taking up another position in the Company. Bert Rawlings became Tinshop Foreman in September 1960 and Ted Barnes took up a similar role in the factory's general stores. Further promotions followed in 1961 with Les Matthews taking over the running of the Process Floor and Don Weston put in charge of the Tinshop fitting staff. Jeff Buckingham, another temporary Factory Manager, replaced Tim Lester and towards the end of the year the factory's canteen was given a major facelift with new floor, new walls, new furnishings and a modernised kitchen.

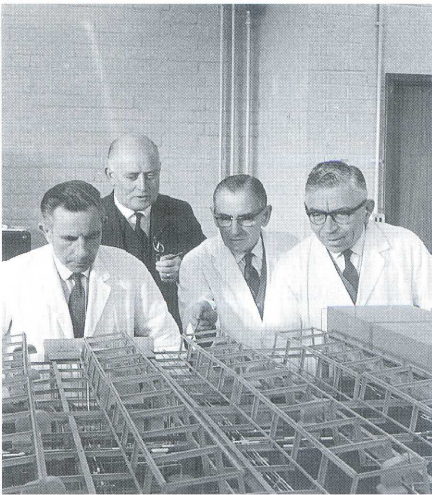
Two John Thompson boilers were installed in 1962, one of the old coal fired boilers was converted to a steam accumulator and the factory switched to burning oil after bulk storage tanks were installed behind the boilerhouse. The factory's milk collection lorries, now mostly Commers, were picking up about 40 loads a day, 15 tons of sugar a day, in 2cwt sacks, was being used, and the Tinshop, equipped with 5 bodymakers and 3 high speed presses was using 3½ million sheets of tinsplate annually enough to produce 50 million cans and 100 million ends. The five filling machines available, with a filling rate of 150 tins per minute each, fed three main packing lines whose labelling speeds varied from 200 to 400 tins a minute. Harold Ives, previously at Omagh Factory, became the new Factory Manager in August and two more senior staff joined the condensery. Geoff Boyle as Milk Supplies Manager and John Brewer as Assistant Factory Accountant. Chippenham Factory closed down in 1962 and for a while some of its empty buildings were used as a finished goods store for Staverton's products now being filled, labelled and packed under the supervision of new Foreman Bill Glover who replaced Frank Hinton after his retirement in June. Richard Andrew was appointed Assistant Factory Manager in early 1963 and Joe Groom took over from Bert Lane as Chief Clerk in March.



Land at the rear of the Factory being cleared for the new £750,000 Culinary Plant 1966.



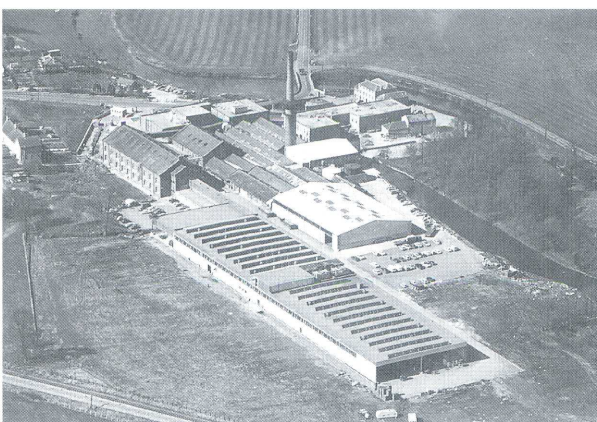
Harold Ives, Staverton's Factory Manager 1962 - 1989.



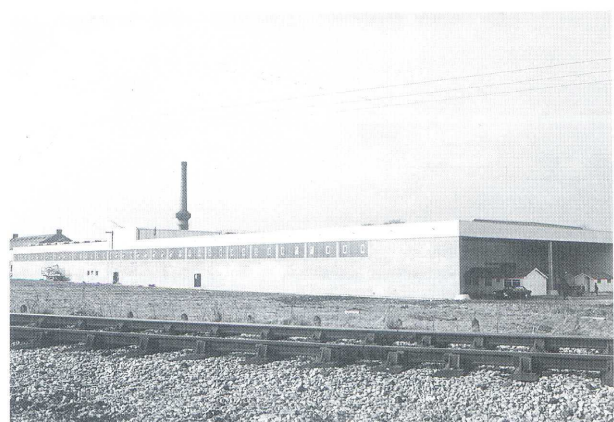
Jack Whitmarsh, Joe Groom, Alfie Earl and Len Wells study a model of the new Crosse & Blackwell Culinary Plant 1966.



The Rank of old Weaver's Cottages being Demolished 1966.



Ariel View of the Factory showing the Culinary Plant and new Milk Warehouse.

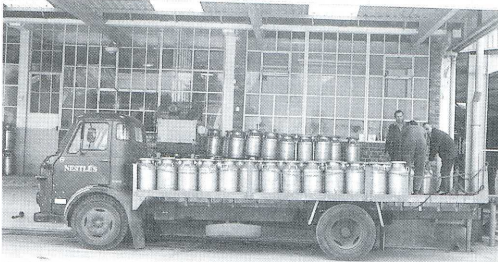


The Crosse & Blackwell Culinary Products Plant nearing completion in 1967.

Bert, who had come to the factory in 1910, had become Chief Clerk in 1937 and had completed 52 years service, a remarkable record which was honoured by Managing Director W.A. Manahan at a retirement dinner held for Bert at the George Hotel in Trowbridge.

The sweat and strain of handling the heavy 2cwt sacks of sugar was finally removed in 1963 when two 15 ton bulk sugar silos were installed in a room below the old sugar loft. The recently revamped canteen was serving a range of hot meals and drinks to the 300 Staverton employees with breakfast and a cooked tea costing 6p and lunch 7p. Tea and coffee could be purchased for 1p a cup. Since the early 1960's the factory employees had been trying to start up a Social Club and in 1964 the redundant old office block was used as a social amenities building after being equipped with a snooker table, table tennis table and dartboard although the management would not allow alcoholic drinks to be dispensed on the premises. A keen and active Social Club committee organised annual indoor sports competitions, coach trips to Europe, dances, socials, bingo and childrens parties. Soccer and cricket teams were formed and, as well as organising games with other local clubs, annual soccer and cricket matches were played against teams from Head Office with mixed success. The highlight of the Social Club year was the annual Flower Show and Gala Day, held on the factory grounds, organised jointly with the West Wilts Chrysanthemum and Dahlia Society and culminating in a grand dance usually attended by a well known band or group. These popular annual events attracted large crowds, senior management from Head Office and other Nestle centres and continued throughout the 1960's and early 1970's. Staverton teams regularly won the snooker Worth Cup, hosted by Aylesbury Factory for many years, and the factory fishing team generally came out winners against opposition when fishing in the abundant River Avon from the factory grounds.

The working week was reduced to 40 hours in 1965 and wages for a basic week were £11 for men over 18 and £8.25 for women. Employee numbers averaged 300, Eric Sykes had been appointed Factory Chemist and Eddie Gamble became Assistant Foreman in the Packing room supervising the finishing of the four main products, Nestles Sweetened Condensed, Ideal Milk, Sterilised Cream and Nestles Skimmed Milk. 1966 was the most significant year to date for Staverton factory with the introduction of the Company Superannuation fund, the celebration of the Company's centenary, the building of a large new warehouse and the start of a major expansion that would bring the first new products to the factory since its foundation almost 70 years previously. Company centenary celebrations took place in the factory with specially organised events in the canteen, each employee received a commemorative inscribed silver sweet dish and a celebration bonus ranging from 4 weeks extra pay for long service workers to a week's wage for those with less than two years. The new road transport oriented warehouse was constructed behind the red brick process block, the old weavers cottages on the high bank above the factory were demolished and the railway siding, used extensively since 1935, was removed to make way for the new Culinary Products Plant. Work started on the construction of the £750,000 Crosse & Blackwell Plant in February 1967 when the first piles were driven and throughout the summer the factory reverberated to the constant thump of the piledriver and the rumble of hundreds of contractors lorries as they removed tons of soil and clay from the site and delivered the building materials. Designed by London based architects Beard, Bennett, Wilkins and Partners, the new plant was constructed by Laings and a new car park, on land at the back of the milk warehouse, new effluent disposal plant and improved mains water supply had to be provided to service the new factory. Adverts went out to recruit new workers to man the plant and potential female employees were offered £11.12p per 40 hour week, working on alternate shifts and with free transport to and from the factory. Meanwhile, in the condensery, operations continued as normally as possible and Harold Scrine was made Foreman of Milk Processing, Jack Smith Foreman of the warehouse and Ray Thompson took charge of the factory's stores. The Culinary Plant was completed in early 1968 and the first tins of 8 ozs spaghetti rings in tomato sauce rolled off the production line in March. Baked beans and tomato soup followed in April and all these products were packed under the Crosse & Blackwell label. Fred Debnam was appointed Culinary Manager, Steve Beard Culinary Engineer and Bill Glover, formerly in charge of tinned milk filling and packing, became the first Culinary Plant Supervisor. At the start, the plant was equipped with one 15ozs line, two 8ozs lines and two soup lines, production ran on two nine hour shifts and the maintenance department went onto three shifts in November. A twilight shift was started later in the year, staffed mainly by women who worked from 5pm to 10pm and received £5 per week. In order to supply the new plant with cans the Tinshop operation had to be re-organised and extended and the bodymakers were re-sited on the two lower floors, the ground floor for culinary cans, the middle floor for milk cans and the Press Shop set up in a converted materials store across the road from the Tinshop.



Unloading the last delivery of Churned Milk. March 1973.



G U A R A N T E E
This product is free from all artificial preservatives and complies with all food regulations. Should it fail to give entire satisfaction, please communicate with Crosse & Blackwell Ltd., Quality Control Dept., St. George's House, Crowdon, Surrey.

PREPARED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY CROSSE & BLACKWELL LTD ST. GEORGE'S HOUSE CROWDON, SURREY



I N G R E D I E N T S
Spaghetti Rings, Tomato Puree, Sugar, Cream, Salt, Onions, Tapioca Starch, Herbs, Spices, Garlic.

N E T W E I G H T
15 3/4 OZ (446g)

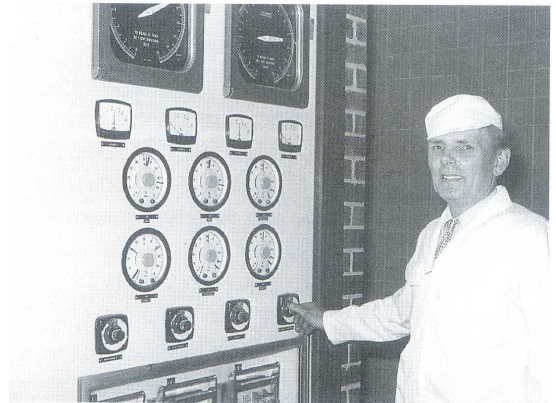
D I R E C T I O N S
Heat in a saucepan, stirring gently.



The First Products produced in the Culinary Plant 1968.



Thelma Roberts packing Alphabet Spaghetti in the Culinary Plant 1969.



Culinary Supervisor Bill Glover checks out the Simons Materials Handling and Weighing System.

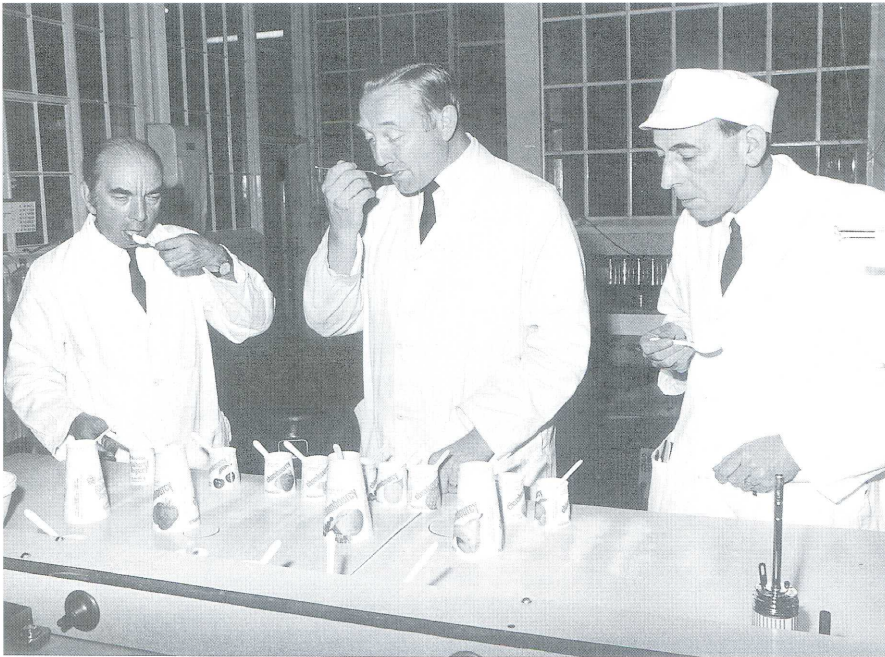


Tony Martin working on the Chilled Products Process Floor 1973.



The advent of the Culinary Plant increased the factory's work force to 450 and mens wages were now £12.50 basic plus £4 for those who worked shifts. During the year Martin Spearey joined the Staverton Engineering team, initially seconded to Culinary but later put in charge of the factory Engineering Services Department. The euphoria of all the exciting events that had been happening in the factory during this time was somewhat subdued later in the year when serious flooding swamped the factory, covered the bridge parapets and deluging the low lying offices to a depth of 3 to 4 feet. It had been the biggest flood for many years, disrupting the movement of both transport and employees for several days and caused severe damage to office equipment and fittings. The 'baked beans factory' as it became known was linked to the Tinshop by a single storey welfare block which contained cloakrooms, toilets, clocking points and the medical centre. A corridor above contained the can runs which conveyed the cans from the Tinshop into a palletising room from where they were sent on to the filling machines located in the centre of the plant. Every modern facility was installed in the plant to produce the new products and included sophisticated bean sorting equipment, an automatic tube blancher, automatic Simons material handling and weighing equipment and a bank of rotary sterilisers and coolers. Other sections contained a tomato puree opening plant, sauce making systems, two part filling machines, soup calefactor and spin cooler, packing and sorting departments, quality control laboratory, hot room and warehouse. The packing room was laid out on two levels with the labelling machines on a mezzanine floor overlooking the packing and case glueing lines below. Part of the upstairs level also contained a small canteen and office accommodation and a stairway led to the service area on the roof which housed the large water storage tanks and the cooling towers. Most of the dry ingredients used in the products were held in bulk storage hoppers with sugar and salt being fed into the system from large 15 ton bulk silos which were regularly replenished from road tankers.

Steve Jones became Milk Products Production Manager in 1969 and Herman Kuratle joined the factory's Engineers, both arriving at a time when the milk canning business was beginning to decline due mainly to a drop in demand and the Milk Marketing Board's alterations of collection and despatch areas. More and more fresh milk supplies were being directed away from the area and this greatly reduced the manufacturing availability at Staverton Condensery. The Company, aware of the declining situation for some time, had been making contingency plans and having recently acquired an interest in the French Chambourcy yogurt business, decided to set up a chilled manufacturing operation at Staverton's under-utilised milk canning factory. John Richardson was sent to Staverton in 1971 to commence trial yogurt production and a small amount of manufacturing equipment was installed alongside the milk processing plant in the red brick block which later became known as Y Plant. The inevitable came in 1972 when the Company announced its plans to close the milk cannery after further decline of the business due to the stagnation in the tinned milk market, a reduction in export volumes and a large increase in the cost of fresh milk. Evaporated milk production ceased in July and Sweetened Condensed by the end of the year. The last delivery of fresh milk from the farms came on March 31st the following year and immediately a £500,000 refit began to convert the redundant milk factory into a yogurt manufacturing plant, the transition being completed with very little structural upheaval and loss of employment to the work force. The first commerical chilled products to be produced in the newly converted plant were fruit and natural yogurts, in conical shaped wax pots, and fresh single and double cream. Fred Debnam, the first Culinary Plant Manager, became Milk Supplies Manager in 1972 on the retirement of Geoff Boyle and Colin Heavens later took over the vacant Production Manager's position in Culinary which had started to produce private label products for Marks & Spencers, David Greig and APT as well as export Spaghetti Rings for Findus. The baked beans plant was equipped with a Langenkamp auto can opener for tomato puree, a Turner Eureka winnower, Kipp Kellie de-stoner and 120 head Sortex colour sorters for bean cleaning and sorting with a capacity to handle 4 tons an hour. Beans were processed in an FMC tube blancher with two Scott washers which could blanch 3 tons of dry beans an hour, sauce was made in two 500 gallon mixers and 4 275 gallon mixers linked to hydroheaters and a calefactor system, in the case of tomato soup, which heated the liquid product prior to pumping it to the reservoirs above the filling machines. Two of the six fillers ran at 300 cans per minute, the 8ozs and 10ozs machines at 250 cans per minute and the other two soup fillers at 180 and 120 cans per minute respectively. All the production lines packed into cardboard cartons except the two soup lines, 4 & 5, which used shrinkwrap pack formats on Kister packers. Dry pasta conveyance to the solids fillers was carried out by a combination of vibrating tables and jetvac propelling systems.



Eric Sykes (Factory Chemist)
Harold Ives (Factory Manager)
& Fred Brown (Dep, Chemist)
tasting pots of Fruit Yogurt.



The first Chambourcy
Yogurts, in Wax Pots,
Produced at Staverton.



Queenie Davis Tipping plastic Yogurt Pots into the
Scrambler 1970's.



Mary Bailey checking Fruit Sundaes
coming off the Hamba Line 1970's.

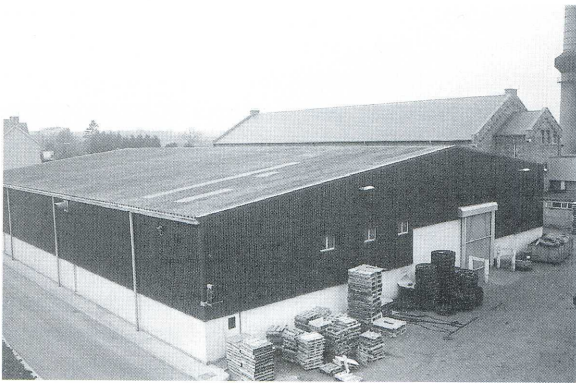


Right - Chambourcy Refrigerated
Lorry 1979.

The newly operational Chilled Products Plant ran into its first difficulties in 1975 when the loss of Private Label fruit yogurts caused a serious reduction in outputs, although some small volumes of desserts, recently introduced, helped to soften the impact and the year's total of chilled manufacture came out at just 43 million pots. Another disruption had affected the factory earlier, in July, when, after pay negotiations had broken down, 300 of the work force joined a 24 hour strike called by the Union in support of their demand for a £10 a week pay increase. The trouble stemmed from the Union's request for pay parity with the maintenance staff wages and shift pay and before the matter was finally settled further disruptions in the form of an overtime ban and work to rule had taken place. Both manufacturing plants slowly increased their outputs, with chilled producing 49 million pots in 1976, and with it the factory work force which now numbered over 500, the highest level it had ever been in the site's history. Findus took over Chambourcy management control in 1976 with Roger White becoming Regional Manager and Ron Channon Depot Manager at Staverton where the chilled products were now being filled into pre-formed plastic pots. The Tinshop was being managed by Ron Coleman and its six bodymakers and eight presses were producing 123 million cans and 246 million ends annually from 8 million sheets of tinplate. Syd Ricketts was appointed Assistant Personnel Manager, Stan Hodgkiss became Safety Officer, Kath Perks took over Training, Sister Edna Legg ran the factory's Medical Centre with nurses Hill and Crook and Brian Bessant joined the Laboratory as Deputy Chemist. Severe flooding of the River Avon affected the factory again in the late summer, although not as badly as 1968, and the factory's 'picturesque' wooded 'island' was devastated by an attack of Dutch Elm Disease resulting in 49 trees being felled and destroyed. Chilled volumes increased to 63 million pots in 1977 with small fruit yogurts being the dominant product sold, accounting for 36 million pots of the total which included 15 million pots of desserts. Peter Whear was appointed Factory Chief Engineer and Val Winters became Staverton's Personnel Manager after the retirement of Jack Whitmarsh at the end of 1976. The factory's historic support of the local community came to the fore again in July when it made facilities available at the site for Staverton village to hold their Queen's Silver Jubilee celebration, a day of social events including childrens sports and games, on the spare ground at the back of the factory.

By 1978 Nestle had acquired the major interest in Chambourcy and production of chilled products at the factory slowly increased from 67 million pots in 1978 to 72 million pots in 1980. Investment in the site had also increased with £2½ million being spent on improvements between 1978 and 1980 some of this finance going towards the reforestation of the 'island', with 300 new trees and shrubs, and modifications to the factory chimney which was fitted with a metal venturi to help resolve a smuts emission problem. The continuing steady growth of both manufacturing plants through the 1970's had increased Staverton's work force to over 600 by 1979 and the total factory output had reached 50,000 tonnes annually. Y Plant was receiving 5 tanker loads of fresh milk a day and the plant's throughput of 3,000 litres an hour was being converted mainly into fruit yogurts. Hamba filling machines, with a capacity of 7,200 pots an hour, were used to fill the products which after packing were placed into cold stores and kept at 5°C before being released and sent out onto the market in a fleet of refrigerated vehicles. Chambourcy had become third in the UK Dairy Products market with small fruit yogurts accounting for the bulk of the sales at 40 million pots annually. The Culinary Plant was producing around 4 million cases a year by the end of the 1970's and plans to streamline the factory's can production operation had been made with the provision of a Littel tinplate cutting plant, the construction of which commenced in 1979. Costing £1 million, the large square Littel building was sited behind the Tinshop and the HiTech, ultra modern plant would convert tinplate, from large coils, into cut sheets for can making, not only for Staverton but other canneries in the Nestle group. Completed in 1980 and handling 10 ton coils of tinplate purchased from steel mills in South Wales and the Low Countries, the new plant would initially cut 20,000 tons of plate a year at an annual value of £10 million. Each coil, 3½ miles long and costing £4,000, would produce enough tinplate for 200,000 can bodies or 750,000 ends and the factory would also supply Omagh, Ashbourne and Dalston's tinplate needs.

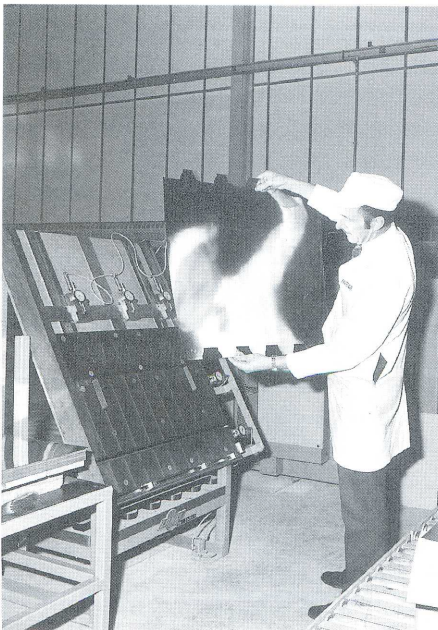
Further re-organisation of the Chambourcy business came in 1980 when a regional distribution centre was set up at Staverton under National Distribution Manager Alf Galley. The chilled dessert range had expanded and Y Plant was now producing 4 varieties of A La Creme, Fruit sundaes, Flanby desserts, Supremes and Sundae specials which accounted for 12% of the 76 million pots output for 1980, although the major portion of the volume was still being taken up by fruit and natural yogurts and three varieties of fresh cream.



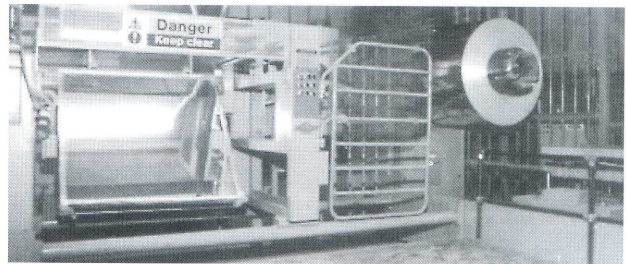
The £1 Million Littel Tin Cutting Plant erected 1980.



The Factory's Island devastated by Dutch Elm Disease 1976.



Tinshop Manager Ron Coleman checks a sheet of plate in the Littel Plant.



Ten Ton Coil of Tinplate being fed into the Littel Cutter.



Culinary produced the revolutionary, but short lived, Saucy Spuds product in 1981.



Christine Gittins, Pat Symms and Cath Gunning packing Fruit Yogurts in Y Plant 1979.



Jim Holden adjusting the Sortex Bean Sorting Unit - Culinary Plant 1980's.

The ongoing growth of the chilled operation necessitated the provision of two further filling machines which increased the total to ten, seven of which were Hamba machines. Culinary volumes dropped slightly in 1980, some of it due to the decline in 8ozs sales and to respond to this market trend the plant's second 8ozs line, No.3, was converted to 15ozs size. The factory's manufacturing costs increased significantly in the early 1980's when the cost of town water rose by 30% to 24p per 1,000 litres, and this in turn affected the cost of effluent disposal which went up to 34p per 1,000 litres. Recent management changes had brought in Olive Liddington as the new factory Personnel Manager, Len Whitfield replaced the retired Joe Groom as Staverton's Administration Manager and Syd Ricketts took over the General Services Department. A trade recession hit both plants at the end of the year resulting in each being forced to operate a four day week in December. The problem had arisen from persistent high interest rates which had depressed the markets, pushed sales down and forced the major supermarkets to impose strict buying levels in order to reduce stocks. The effects of this recession continued into the following year resulting in chilled outputs dropping by 3 million pots, although cream sales had surprisingly increased. Culinary, however, seemed to benefit from the difficult economic situation and outputs increased to 4.8 million cases largely due to a significant increase in Baked Beans production which now accounted for over 50% of the total culinary volume. Several new products were launched in both plants in 1981 with chilled introducing Bonjour yogurts and culinary developing a new potato based product, Saucy Spuds, for which special dicing equipment had to be installed. This revolutionary new product, however, was short lived, failed to achieve expected sales, was later transferred to Peterhead factory for manufacture and subsequently withdrawn from the market after a relatively short life span. Culinary production was further enhanced with the introduction of private label products for Sainsburys and trials began with the shipment of liquid tomato puree from Italy in bulk tankers. Yearly investment to modernise the factory continued with £275,000 being spent in 1981, most of it to provide new cold stores for the expanding Chambourcy operation.

Chilled ran into difficulties again in 1982 experiencing a drop in volumes to 58 million pots caused by a price war with competitors, loss of business from the large multiples and unusual seasonal conditions which suppressed sales of chilled products in the summer. Culinary volumes remained just under 5 million cases although baked beans sales had increased to 2.7 million cases. The rising cost of fuel oil prompted the factory to convert to the cheaper gas burning in the boilers and a gas terminal building was provided near the small bridge over the millstream opposite the boilerhouse. With the problems of 1982 now overcome chilled production reached 65 million pots in 1983 and the first Erca Formseal filling machine, which could produce 20,000 pots per hour, was installed and took over the filling of Bonjour, initially in a four pack format. Prior to Staverton taking on the Bonjour manufacture, the product had been produced in France and delivered to the UK in up to ten refrigerated lorry loads a week to meet the weekly sales of around 1 million pots. Mike Corcoran took over as Chilled Products Production Manager and John Richardson became Chilled Development Manager concentrating on some of the new products in the pipeline such as Waistline yogurt, Chambor, Trifles, Black Forest dessert and wholemilk yogurt which were being added to Chambourcy's growing product portfolio.

Culinary volumes exceeded 5 million cases for the first time in 1983 due to an increase in Customer Own Label business and further growth in baked beans sales plus the introduction of new products such as Wholewheat Spaghetti and Waistline Soup which had added to the expanding range of Crosse & Blackwell products being produced in the Culinary Plant. Plant modifications were commenced with the installation of new fillers and seamers, a new steriliser and a Packing Room extension into the Warehouse to create room for the first of the Iwema shrinkwrap packing lines. New maintenance workshops were built against the north wall of the Culinary Plant and a new fork lift battery charging bay was added to the outside wall of the beans warehouse. In the Tinshop, the first Soudronic can making line was installed together with three new high speed presses greatly improving the can making operation which was using 18,000 tons of tinsplate annually to produce 245 million cans, 490 million ends, some of them in the new tin free steel being trialed. The Soudronic bodymaker was an entirely new concept in can making technology whereby can bodies were electronically welded as opposed to the old soldering method which would now become redundant. Other changes to the factory's operation included the introduction of a computerised FSC (Factory Stock Control) system and its attendant VDU's began to appear in offices and were linked to the Company's central computer system in Croydon. The investment in the factory for 1983 was £2.5 million and the recently modernised canteen was offering Breakfasts and Lunches for 25p with an additional 10p for extras and a 10p surcharge for employees who wished to use the adjacent restaurant service.



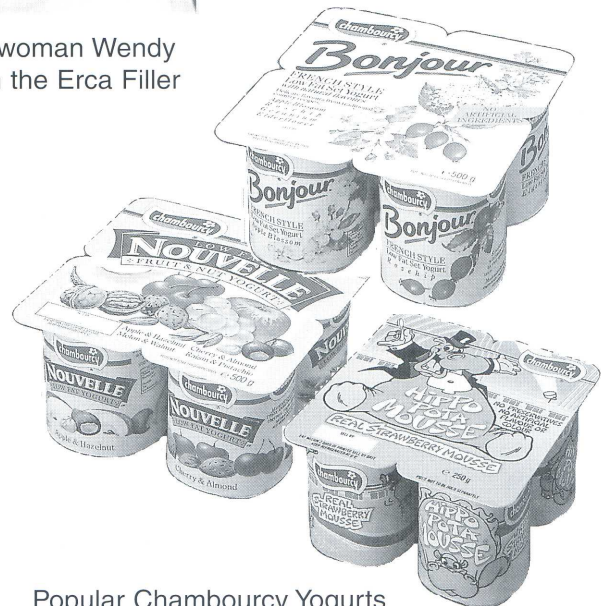
Chilled Production Manager Mike Corcoran and Forewoman Wendy Hyde check the first Nouvelle Yogurts production from the Erca Filler 1984.



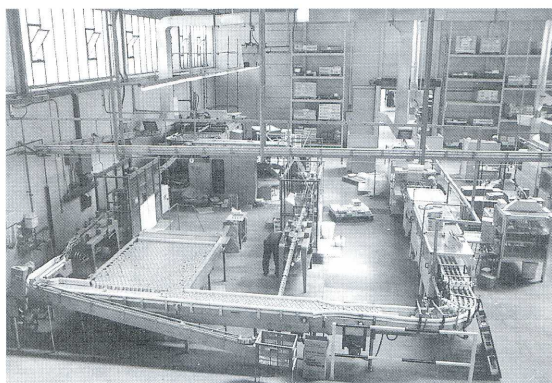
Fatima Bellazrak packing Cheesecakes - Y Plant 1985.



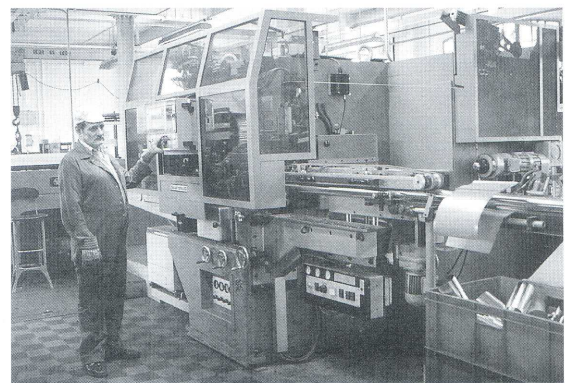
Pensioner's Party held in the Factory Canteen 1986.



Popular Chambourcy Yogurts & Desserts 1980's.



Iwema Shrinkwrap Packing Line. Culinary Plant Late 1980's.



Dennis Porter operating a Soundronic Can Body Maker - Tinshop 1980's.

Staverton's Chilled Products business made major advances in 1984 with outputs increasing by 50% to 97 million pots and the formation of a new Logistics Department in the factory required some Head Office personnel to relocate from Croydon to Staverton. Ken Sanderson took over the factory's chilled operation as Technical Manager and Mike Corcoran became Staverton's new Logistics Department Manager being replaced as Chilled Production Manager by James Slater. A second Erca filler was installed which helped the successful launch of Nouvelle yogurts which, by the end of the year, had sold 12 million pots. Bonjour had taken over as the principle chilled product with 36 million pots being produced and pushing small fruit yogurts into second place with 23 million pots sold. The desserts range was extended with the introduction of Cheesecakes, in blackcurrant, strawberry and black cherry flavours and the childrens dessert market was tested with the launch of Robot yogurts. Production was up again in the Culinary Plant with volumes reaching just under 5¹/₂ million cases and the product list was further enlarged with an extended range of Wholewheat Pasta products, Private Label Spicy Shells and three new Tomato Soups with mint, herb and spice flavours. The re-organisation of the Culinary Packing Room was completed with the installation of the third Iwema line and was now entirely sited on the ground floor. A Sorting Department and hot room occupied the mezzanine floor space that had originally housed the culinary labelling machines. Tomato puree was now being delivered in 200 kg. drums requiring the provision of a CSF vacuum pump system and the old hydroheater units for processing the batches of sauce were replaced with steam injectors. To cope with the dramatic increase in volumes from the plant a night cleaning shift was introduced and, to support the heavy workload on the Plant's Manager, Pete Lavis was appointed Assistant Culinary Production Manager. A second Soudronic bodymaker and new Krupp Canomatic machine was installed in the Tinshop which was using 28,000 tons of tinplate annually and producing 257 million cans and 515 million ends on its seven can making lines and eight high speed presses. As with the Culinary Plant, the Tinshop's increased workload warranted the appointment of an Assistant Tinshop Manager and Colin Smith took up the position in September. A computerised Time and Absence control system was introduced in late 1984, the factory's team of HGV drivers received Safe Driving Awards and Rod Swift was appointed Senior Security Officer for the site. Basic wages had risen to £100 for a 40 hour week plus an additional £20 for two shift working and £34 for working nights. Annual paid holiday leave was 24 days for all employees and Staverton factory pensioners, plus their colleagues from Chippenham and Salisbury, had been treated to an annual Pensioners Christmas Party since the early 1980's.

The phenomenal growth in the Chilled products business continued in 1985 with yogurt and dessert volumes increasing again to 125 million pots. Y Plant was beginning to overstretch its manufacturing capacity and space for the extra volumes of chilled products now being made, was running out necessitating the factory to convert the raw materials warehouse into an additional cold store. A third Erca was commissioned in Y Plant and the first production runs of Chocolate Mousse started aided by the addition of new Burdosa whipping equipment and a Cetra packing line. The current success of the Chilled business at Staverton had outstripped expectations and Chambourcy was able to announce a small operating profit for the first time since chilled products started up at the factory in the early 1970's. It was a totally different picture in Culinary in 1985 with outputs falling by nearly a million cases due to intense competition, cheap imports from the EEC and severe pressure on prices by the major supermarket chains. Demand for Crosse & Blackwell products fell, baked bean sales dropped half a million cases and due to the resulting build up of high stock levels the Culinary and can making operations had to be halted for several weeks in September. Despite these current problems modifications continued in both plants with the installation of the first Filtec can fault detecting device on line 1, the erection of a 40 ton external sugar silo, the provision of two high speed palletiser/depalletiser units and the preparations for the new Ace system to replace the outdated Simons ingredients handling and weighing equipment. A number of new products had come on to stream including Healthy Balance Baked Beans, Dinosaur pasta shapes and various new pasta products for Tesco. A fourth Soudronic can making line was added in the Tinshop's modernisation programme and, despite the demise of the Culinary business during the year, the level of can and end making had only marginally reduced.

The Chilled business continued to accelerate and outputs increased by a further 44% in 1986 to 173 million pots. A fourth Erca was provided and production commenced on Real White Chocolate Mousse, HippoPotaMousse and Um Bongo Cream Desserts. Chambourcy's Telesales and Sales Administration, under General Sales Manager Paul Butler, plus Distribution Dept. relocated to Staverton, Alistair Inglis took over as Chilled Production Manager, Terry Folkes became Product Development Manager and Ian Grant was appointed Chilled Plant Engineer.

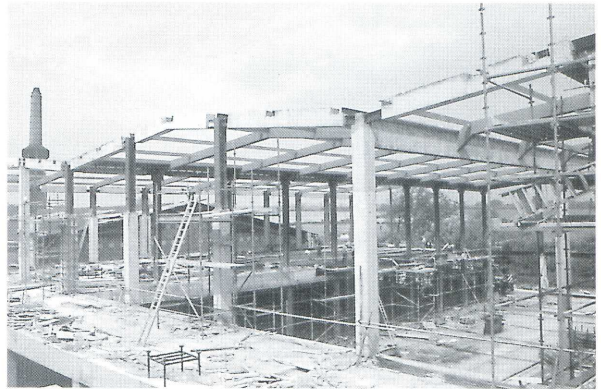
Chilled products manufacturing, originally set up in the old milk condensery in the early 1970's, had grown into a massive operation over the last 15 years and had begun to outgrow its limited and outdated production facility at the factory. Company commitment and investment in the Chilled business with its anticipated future growth, would require an expansion of its operations at Staverton and by 1986 plans were made to provide a brand new manufacturing facility which would cater for the business's needs into the 21st century. Preparatory work on the new multi million pounds complex began during the year and Staverton Factory would witness the biggest changes to its operation since Anglo-Swiss took over the site in 1897. The decline in demand for canned products kept Culinary volumes static at 4 million cases and to reduce cost and streamline the operation some reorganisation was necessary resulting in a small number of redundancies amongst the work force. Culinary manufacturing was concentrated on three main production lines and the small amount of Tomato Soup still being produced was transferred to Peterhead Factory. To add to the culinary's problems in 1986, severe weather conditions in Michigan and Ontario had devastated the year's bean crop badly affecting quality, pushing up prices and creating supply problems. To counteract the shortfall and quality problems with the North American beans, supplies of Mindak beans were obtained and used in the plant throughout the latter part of 1986. Reorganisation in the tin making operation resulted in the Press Shop being resited on the ground floor of the Tinshop and, to comply with recently introduced noise regulations, sound proof booths were provided around the high speed presses and liners. The relocation of the Press Shop allowed the old warehouse building, which it had vacated, to be re-used as a Chambourcy raw materials store. During 1986 further equipment was purchased for the canteen, including new hot and cold vending machines, and the cost of hot drinks was reduced from 7p to 5p.

Work on the new Chilled Products factory, to be designated D Plant, commenced in June 1987 with the driving of 600 piles and the removal of 50,000 tons of soil and clay from the two areas that would house the new manufacturing facility and the new car park. D Plant was erected on land behind the cold stores, the existing factory car park, and a new enlarged car park was laid out on vacant land adjacent to the south side of the Culinary Plant. A new access road into the factory had to be provided, requiring the demolition of three of the existing 6 Nasmilco cottages, and a 50 metre wide steel and concrete platform was built across the millstream to provide extra turning space for the refrigerated lorries using the cold store loading bays. Meanwhile, production continued in the cramped Y Plant and a 40% increase in desserts production pushed the chilled volumes to over 200 million pots. More new products were introduced including the revolutionary Flower Flavoured yogurts, with essence of geranium, rosehip, elderberry and apple; Orange and Lemon Mousse, Chocolate HippoPota Mousse, Pot au Choc and cream desserts and a fifth Erca was installed with additional Burdosc whipping equipment, a new packing line and CIP unit. Lines 4 and 5, the Tomato Soup lines, were removed in Culinary and No 6. production line was converted to a two shot solids filler to produce the new Fred Bears product, a mix of beans and pasta shapes in tomato sauce. Other new pasta shapes were introduced, Treasure Island and Mr. Men, Healthy Pasta was added to the Healthy Balance range and culinary volumes improved marginally to 4.3 million cases. A second Littel tinplate cutting line, transferred from Dumphries Factory, was installed at the end of 1987 and the Tinshop, with its four Soudronic lines and ten presses, was handling 21,000 tons of plate, enough for 270 million cans and 540 million ends. Clare Hunter joined the Staverton management team in June as the new Quality Assurance Manager, Ian Grant took on the role of Project Engineer for the new D Plant and Alan Axford became the Culinary Plant Production Engineer. £20,000 was spent on further modernisation of the factory canteen and kitchen and the old John Thompson boiler was replaced with a new Babcock Lincoln Robey to enhance the boilerhouse operation.

Construction work on D Plant continued through 1988, the installation of the new effluent and water treatment plants and electrical sub stations, sited at the rear of the factory near the railway bridge, was commenced in the late summer and a new garage was built behind the culinary warehouse. Chilled volume rose again by 7½% to 225 million pots aided by the introduction of B Actif yogurts and Bonjour Rich & Creamy and John Brittain, ex Aylesbury Factory Manager, was appointed Technical Manager of Culinary and Frozen Foods with responsibilities for the whole of the Staverton operation. The Culinary Plant, which had introduced Tom & Gerry pasta and completed the installation of Filtec and Vactrac fault detecting units on the main production lines, experienced another fall in volumes and the recent re-organisations throughout the factory had reduced the work force to 655.



Three of the Nasmilco Cottages being demolished to make way for the Dessert Plant Expansion 1987.



D Plant under construction 1988.



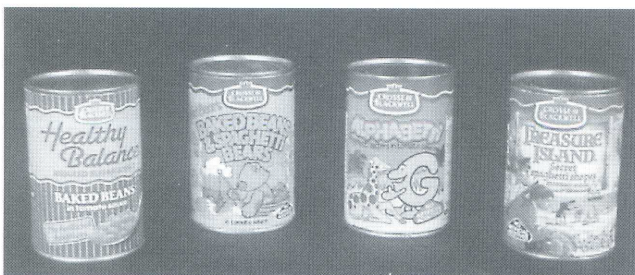
Steel & Concrete Platform being constructed across the Millstream 1987.



New Access Road into the Factory 1987.



New Chilled Yogurts & Desserts 1980's.



New Crosse & Blackwell Products Late 1980's



D Plant nearing Completion 1989.



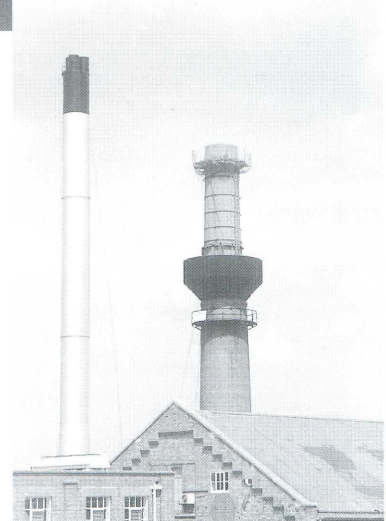
Staverton's Senior Management Team 1988.

- Ron Coleman
- Peter Whear
- Colin Heavens
- Tony Johnson
- Syd Ricketts
- Harold Ives
- Eric Sykes
- Olive Liddington.

Below - New Chilled Desserts Late 1980's.

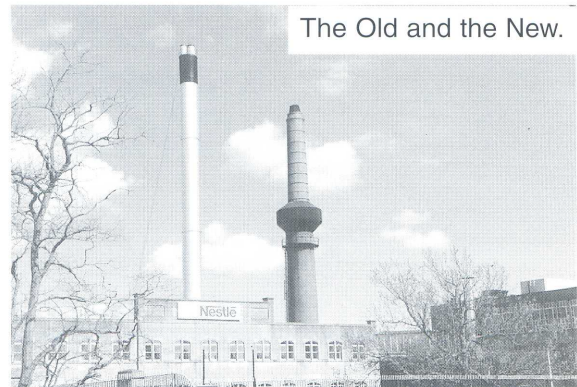
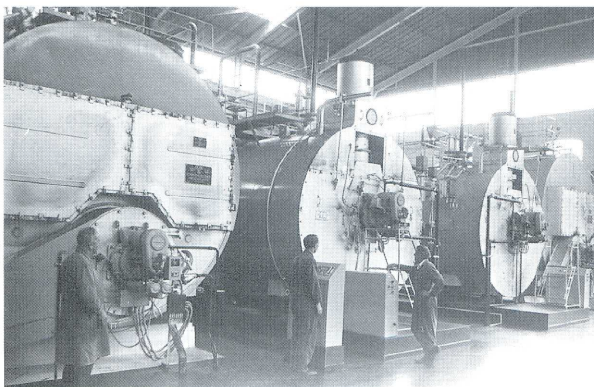


John Stewart, Staverton's Factory Manager 1989 -1992.



The old Red Brick Chimney being Demolished 1989.

Factory Boilerhouse Late 1980's.



Harold Ives, Staverton's Factory Manager for the past 27 years, retired in February 1989 and was replaced by Findus's Longbenton Factory Manager John Stewart who took over a factory undergoing massive development and major changes to its whole operational infrastructure. £17.5 million had already been invested in the new Desserts Plant, £7.75 million on the building and £9.75 million on its manufacturing equipment; the production plants had undergone major modernisation programmes in the last few years and the entire factory's business, management and operation was going through a period of intense restructuring. Many new chilled products were being developed and manufactured including low fat varieties of yogurt and yogurt mousse, and volumes had reached almost 250 million pots. Culinary was concentrating its production on four main lines, the new Ace sauce making system had been completed and outputs for 1989 had increased to 4.2 million cases. Management restructuring under John Stewart resulted in the appointment of Alistair Inglis as Site Production Manager responsible for the factory's three manufacturing plants now being run by Plant Managers Pete Lavis in Culinary, Colin Smith in the Tinshop and John McNicol in Chilled Products. An in-depth review of the Company's can production operations indicated that their continuation in can making had become unviable due to excessive costs and the ongoing decline in the canned foods market and the decision was reluctantly taken to close down Staverton's Tinshop and Press Shop at the end of 1989. In future, all can supplies for the Culinary Plant would be purchased from outside suppliers and the first consignments of cans and ends from CMB were used in the bean factory in early 1990. The face of the factory was radically altered in 1989 when the old red brick factory chimney, built in 1914, was demolished and replaced with a shorter and thinner metal stack. Despite protestations from local environmentalists and industrial archaeology groups that it should be preserved, the demolition had become necessary as the old chimney had outlived its use, had begun to erode badly and could no longer cope efficiently with the modern fuels now being used in the factory's boilers. The new slender silver metal stack, erected slightly to the north of the old chimney base was 50 metres high, contained three separate flues and contributed to the visual changes being created by the factory's extensive modernisation programme designed to equip the site for the business challenges of the new millenium. D Plant became operational in April 1990 and dessert production was transferred from Y Plant into the new facility during the year. Staverton's new Dessert Factory was provided with the most up-to-date hi-tech manufacturing equipment available and was the most modern chilled products factory in Europe. Production would operate on continental shifts, operators had to be specially trained to use the sophisticated computer systems which controlled the plant and a new management structure of Line Controllers, Team Leaders and Shift Managers supervised the operators who would work in the strict hygiene oriented facility. Aero mousses in mint and chocolate flavours began production by the end of 1990 and accounted for 16½ million pots of the Chambourcy dessert sales. Other new desserts were under development, the Hippo range was re-launched and volumes from both chilled plants leapt to over 250 million pots. The movement of desserts production from Y Plant took some of the pressure off the beleaguered old chilled factory which now concentrated on yogurts production with a much reduced operation. The struggling Culinary Plant underwent a major productivity and organisational review in the middle of the year resulting in a 25% reduction in the work force, significant cost savings and a slicker and leaner operation. The Culinary management structure was changed removing a level of supervision and creating a Line Controllers role which replaced the previous Foreman and Chargehand positions and placed more responsibility at the shop floor level. A new filler was installed on No.1 line, pasta space shapes were introduced and Tomato Soup, transferred to Petershead in 1986, returned to be made again at Staverton using an entirely different manufacturing process. Culinary volumes for the year remained just above 4 million cases and the factory reorganisations and plant closures over the last 18 months had reduced the Staverton work force to 581.

By 1991, 70% of the chilled volume was being produced in D Plant. The extensive list of Chambourcy's Chilled Products now included a range of set, stirred, natural and fruit yogurts including Rich & Creamy, Disney and Honey Pots and a growing number of desserts such as Chocolate and White Chocolate Mousse, Hippo Mousses and Hippo Mud, Hippo yogurt Mousse, Rich Fruit Mousse, Pot au Creme, Milky Bar Dessert, Milk Jelly and Aero Mousses in three flavours. Non Erca products included Cream Viennas, Dalky Supremes, Black Forest, Le Grand, Almond & Toffee Cup, Chocolate & Coconut Cup, Cheesecakes in three varieties, Chocolate Bavarois, Gateaux and Liquid Chocolate Desserts. Private label products were being produced for Gateway, Tesco, Sainsburys, Asda and Marks and Spencers. 30,000 litres of fresh milk, from 24 selected farms, were being used daily and total chilled output for the year was 223 million pots.

The Crosse & Blackwell product range comprised Standard and Healthy Balance Beans, a range of Pasta Shapes including Healthy Balance and Wholewheat, Tomato Soups, Fred Bears and Fun Pasta. Disney products were launched during the year and the plant was producing Private Label Beans and Pasta for Sainsburys and a range of Pasta products for Tesco. Culinary enjoyed a better year in 1991 with production reaching 4 1/2 million cases, the highest volume since 1984. Many new initiatives were undertaken in the factory such as the START programme, which stimulated quality improvement projects, and the Culinary Plant had been busy setting up the documentation and training staff to qualify for BS 5750 accreditation. A new Social Club building, located at the far end of the main car park, was opened in 1991 with Nigel Hunt, the Club's Chairman 'pulling' the first pint and the factory laid on a Welcome Week for employees, their families and local residents in the summer.

The Company changed its title to Nestle UK Ltd. at the start of 1992 and the entire remaining Chambourcy Head Office, based at Croydon, moved to take up residence at Staverton Factory in April joined by Chilled Foods General Manager John Brittain and business Financial Controller Mike Bracey. Accommodated mostly in the main office building and old office block, which had been extensively refurbished for their arrival, the new staff quickly settled in and continued to run the business whilst the upper floor of the main block was reorganised and redecorated to re-house the factory Senior Management and general office staff. Sales of desserts increased by a further 20% and exports, mainly to Europe, were now running at 112 tonnes a week helped by the Italian launch of Liquid Chocolate Dessert which increased weekly production of this product to 600,000 pots. Sainsbury's Diet Mousse was launched in May and the factory's weekly volume output was averaging between 4 and 4 1/2 million pots. More production equipment was installed in D Plant including the new RK3 line, Hamba fillers, a new packing line and new blast tunnels. Nesquik, Galak and Red Label desserts started on the RK3 in August and other new products launched by the end of the year included Lemon Bavarois and Sainsbury's Chocolate Dessert. Culinary also introduced some more new products in the form of Pasta in Cheese, Chilli and Barbecue sauce adding to the 41 different recipes currently in use. A three shift operation came into effect in November, volumes remained around 4.2 million cases, new cooling towers were installed in September and alterations were made to the Packing room layout for the provision of a HiCone packing line. In October the Culinary Plant celebrated a major achievement when it gained BS 5750 accreditation at the first attempt and all the hard work and effort put in by the entire culinary work force and quality control department in the past three years to put the system in place, guided by Quality Systems Co-ordinator Bob Washbourne, had paid off. New cloak rooms and toilets for the chilled work force, installed at the entrance to D Plant, came into use in September and new Laboratories, Canteen and Wages Office, provided at the rear of D Plant, were opened in 1992. Working hours for all factory staff were reduced to 37 and John Stewart, Staverton's Factory Manager for the past three years, left to take up a position at Head Office in August and Burnie Owens came to Staverton as the factory's new Technical Manager.

Yogurt production ceased at Staverton in early 1993. Y Plant was closed down and all Gateway yogurts would now be produced in France. Rolo Dessert was launched, another new Hamba was installed, line 2 was converted to auto packing and two 15 ton liquid chocolate storage tanks were emplaced in D Plant to receive bulk chocolate from Rowntrees and other suppliers. The new HiCone line in Culinary got underway in March, bean supplies in 2 ton 'big bags' were trialed and the first eurocan production commenced in October. Holbrooks Baked Beans were developed to try and capture the lower end of the baked beans market and another baked beans label, Thunderbirds, was launched, backed by an extensive advertising campaign to attract the younger consumers in the childrens sector of the market. Culinary embarked on a Cost Benefit Analysis initiative, supported by senior Crosse & Blackwell staff at Head Office, and considerable savings in the plant's operating costs were identified in the first year. TMS (Time management) was introduced, HACCP training commenced and Junior management in both plants started courses to gain an NVQ qualification. The environmental impact of the factory was also being studied in depth and, to help reduce air emissions from the boilerhouse, a new Beel industrial boiler with Hamworthy Low Nox burner was installed during the year as part of the project. The regular launch of new Chambourcy desserts was essential to keep the market vibrant and retain market share and exotic new desserts, some based on well known Company confectionery brands, continued to flow from the factory's product development department. Dairy Box and Black Magic desserts were launched in 1994 together with Hippo Jelly and exports increased to 5,200 tonnes a year. David Findlay, late of Milnthorpe Factory, had replaced Philip Mellis as Factory Engineering Manager and Dudley Cox filled the new position of Sales and Marketing Co-ordinator for the Chambourcy desserts business.



John Brittain, Nestle Chilled Foods General Manager.



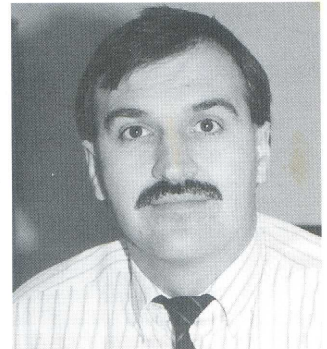
Chambourcy Refrigerated Vehicles, 1990's.



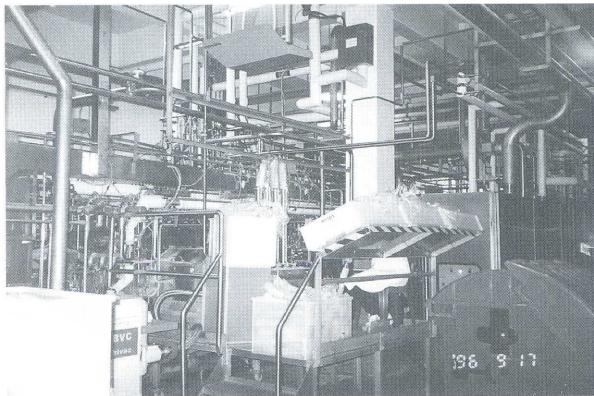
Thunderbirds Baked Beans launched in 1993.



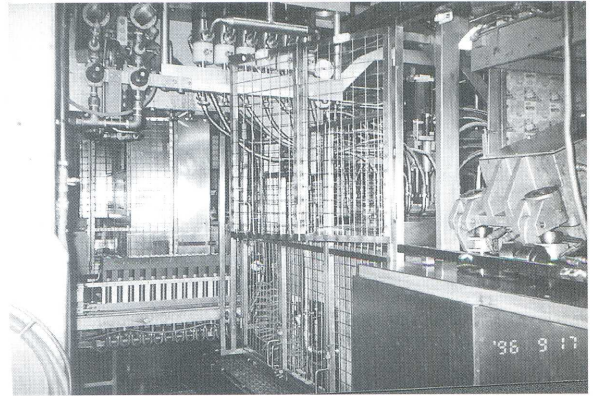
Rolo and Aero Desserts - 1990's.



Staverton's Technical Manager Burnie Owens.



Hamba Dessert Filling Machine - D Plant.



ERCA Dessert Filling Machine - D Plant.



Social Club Chairman Nigel Hunt pours the first Drink in the new Social Club 1991.



Bob Washbourne and some of the Culinary Plant Workforce celebrate their BS 5750 Award 1992..

Despite intense activities to revive the ailing Crosse & Blackwell canned food business in recent years, sales continued to decline and Culinary outputs dropped alarmingly to 2.7 million cases in 1994. The Culinary business was running into serious problems and decisions were finally made by the Company to pull out of the canned food market announcing, in September, their intention to close the Culinary Plant at Staverton in early 1995. Staverton's Crosse & Blackwell Plant, which had been operating on the site since 1968, ceased production in February 1995 with the loss of 145 jobs. In its 28 years of manufacturing it was estimated that 112 million cases of culinary products had left the plant, 182,000 tons of beans had been filled and 62,000 tons of tomato had been used to make the sauces. The Company had tried to sell the operation as a going concern but when this proved unsuccessful the manufacturing equipment was sold off or scrapped. This dramatic loss of one of Staverton's major manufacturing plants reduced the factory's work force to 400 and left the Chilled Products operation to continue the long standing Nestle connection with the site. D Plant dessert volumes increased slightly to 232 million pots and Toffee Crisp and Munchies split pot desserts were launched and produced on the new Hittpac machines at 4,000 pots per hour. The frontage of the factory was irrevocably changed at the end of 1995 when the facing buildings, the redundant red brick yogurt process block and Tinshop, were demolished leaving a large vacant area which was subsequently grassed over and landscaped.

The Nestle logo replaced the Chambourcy brand name on chilled desserts in 1996 when 233 million pots, including the recently launched After Eight, were produced by a work force which now numbered 360 including the 127 business and commercial staff on the site. The factory was producing 18,000 tonnes of Chilled Desserts annually for the UK market with an additional 5,000 tonnes being exported mainly to France, Italy and Spain. During the year Personnel Manager Olive Smith retired and was replaced by Sarah Bettess and Peter Borra became the factory's Operations Engineering Manager. Further operational changes came in 1997, the factory's centenary year, with the Boilerhouse, Staff Shop and Distribution operations being contracted out and David Findlay being promoted to Factory Manager. Three new desserts, Yorkie Chocolate, Yorkie Raisin & Biscuit and Aero Cappuccino joined the chilled products range and another split pot dessert, Lion Bar, began manufacture in September. Real Chocolate Mousse, made with Belgian chocolate, and Aero Light were also launched and the year finished on a high with a weekly production output record being set, 6.75 million pots, and the business set for another good year with volumes up on 1996.

The Chilled operation at Staverton had grown into a considerable business and was now the centre for Nestle Chilled and Herta products. It had also become the UK centre for imports and distribution from 18 European factories and provided sales, administration, distribution and technical support for the range of Buitoni pastas and sauces. A fitting tribute to Staverton's 100 year contribution to the business success of the giant Nestle Company came in Centenary year with the announcement that Cereal Partners would set up operations at the factory and produce breakfast cereals in the converted and modernised redundant Culinary Plant building. The timely arrival of this new business venture confirmed the Nestle Company's commitment to continue operating on the Staverton site and the considerable investment that had been put into the factory in the last decade would ensure that a major food manufacturing operation would remain in the village for many more years to come.



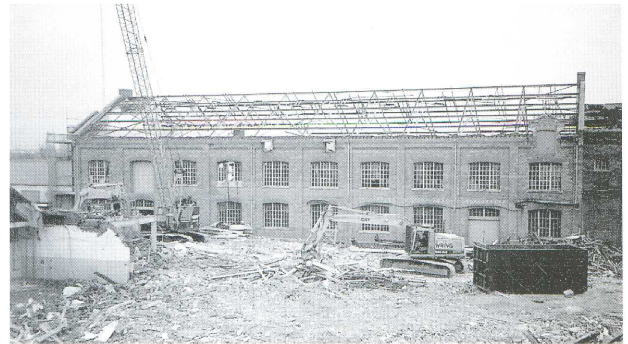
Manufacturing Manager Terry Folkes discusses New Products with the Development Team.



One of the latest Exotic Chilled Desserts Launched in 1996.



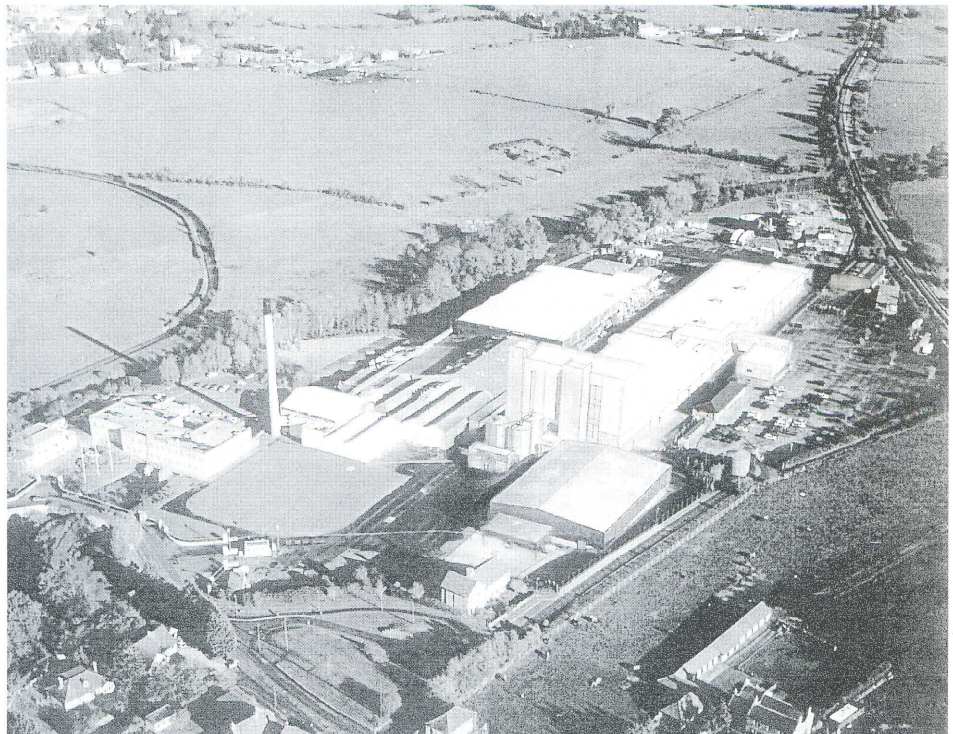
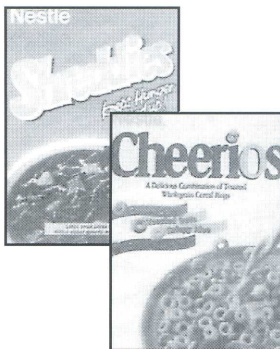
Y Plant being Demolished 1995.



The Tinshop being Demolished 1995.

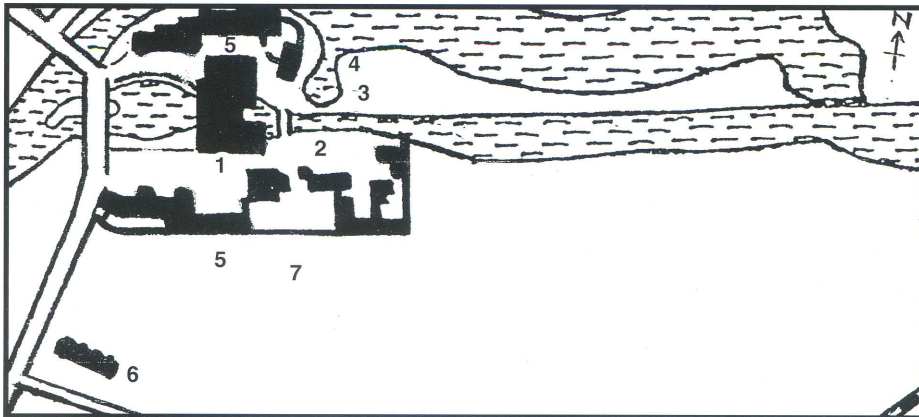


David Findlay
Staveron's Factory
Manager 1997.



Staveron Factory in the year 2000 showing the new Breakfast Cereals Plant.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STAVERTON FACTORY SITE OVER THE LAST 100 YEARS

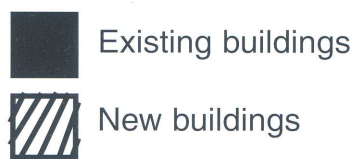
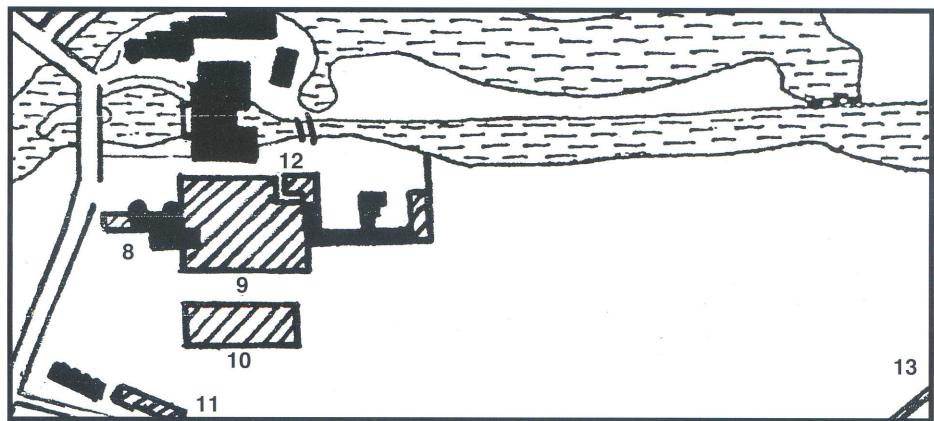


1897

The Cloth Mill as taken over by Anglo-Swiss in 1897. The main mill building (1) was located across the millstream (2) and sluice gates (3) controlled the flow of water through a large mill pond (4). Two ranges of outbuildings and houses (5) flanked the main building and a rank of weavers cottages (6) were sited on the high bank overlooking the mill. The mill's rackfield is indicated at (7).

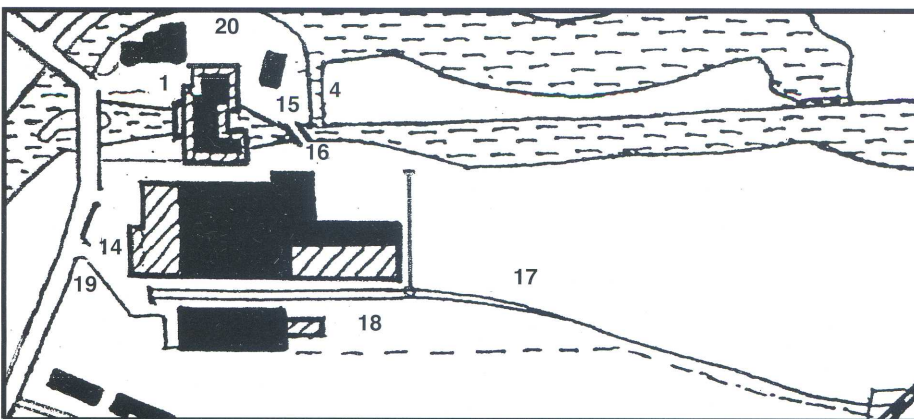
1897 - 1914

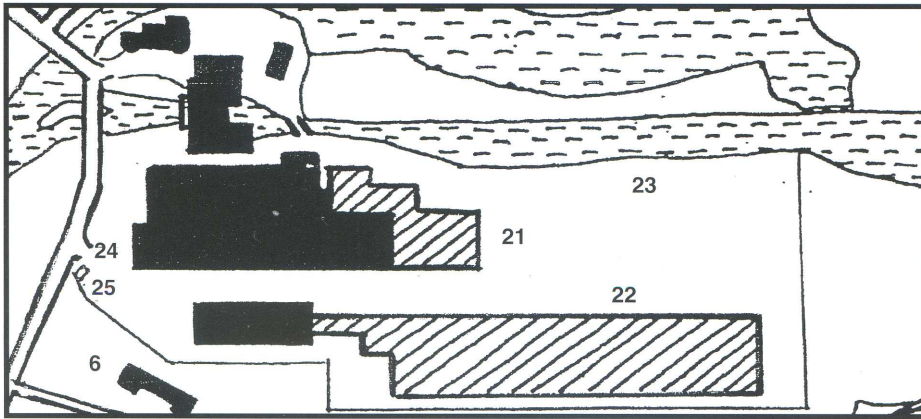
Some of the outbuildings (8) were demolished and new buildings (9) erected. A custom built red brick Tinshop (10) was added to south of the site and a new rank of workmen's cottages (11) sited in Nasmilco Lane. The red brick chimney (12) was constructed in 1914 and land purchased at the rear of the factory (13) for the intended railway siding.



1915 - 1935

The main mill building (1) was reduced to two storeys in 1935 and a new red brick process block added (14). The mill pond (4) was filled in and replaced with a small leet (15) and sluice gate (16). A railway siding (17) was installed and the garage (18) resited at the rear of the Tinshop. A new entrance (19) was opened to the main factory although the middle gate was still being used. Some of the outbuildings on the north side of the site (20) were also removed.



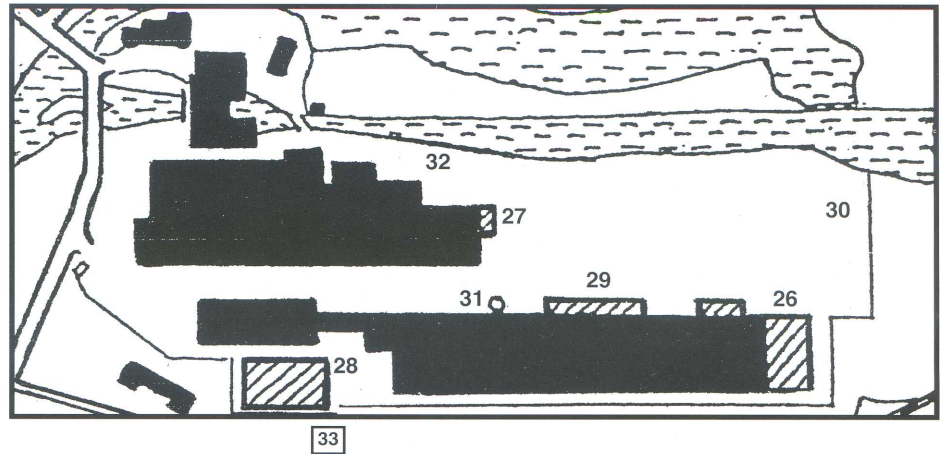


1936 - 1967

A new warehouse (21) was erected at the rear of the process and packing block and the large Culinary Products Plant (22) constructed on land behind the Tinshop. The railway siding was removed, a large car park (23) provided and the south entrance (24) enlarged. The rank of Weaver's cottages (6) were demolished in 1966 and a new effluent disposal plant (25) installed just inside the south gate.

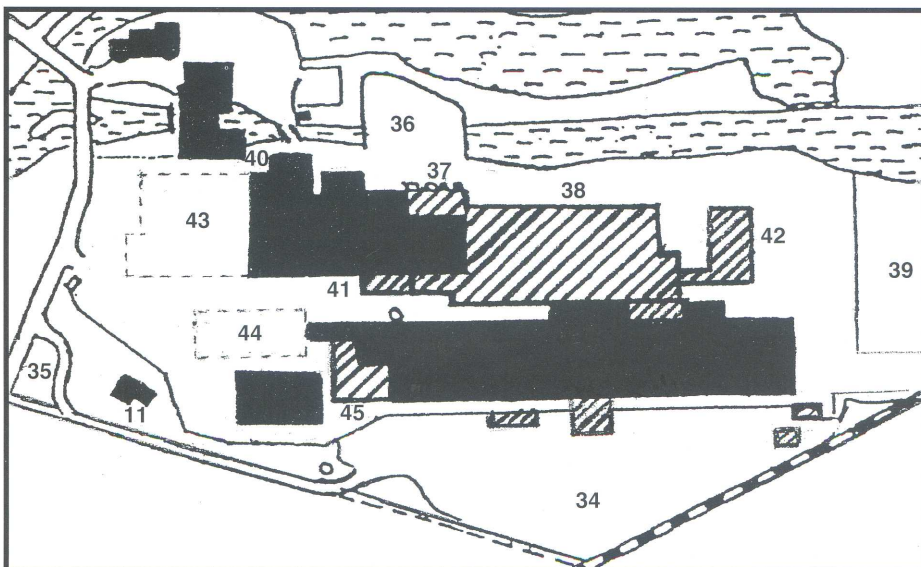
1968 - 1985

The Culinary Plant warehouse was extended (26) and new Cold Stores (27) provided in the existing milk factory buildings. The Littel tin cutting plant (28) was built in 1980, new workshops (29) added to the north wall of the Culinary Plant and the car park extended (30). A 40 tons external sugar silo (31) was installed, the roadway by the millstream widened (32) and a 40,000 gallons water storage tank (33) erected on land to the south of the Littel plant.



1986 -1998

1987 saw the start of massive development. A new car park (34) was constructed, a new access road (35) built into the factory and three of the Nasmilco cottages (11) demolished. A platform was placed across the millstream (36) to facilitate improved loading from the Cold Store bays (37). D Plant (38) was built in 1988 and new water treatment plant and electrical substations constructed on land at the rear of the site (39). The old chimney (40) was demolished in 1989 and



new changing rooms (41), Laboratories and Canteen (42) added in 1992. Y Plant (43) and the Tinshop (44) were demolished in 1995 and work started on the new Breakfast Cereals Plant (45) in 1997.

Acknowledgements

All the material used in this book has been taken from the Staverton Factory archives and other Nestle sources.

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My wife, Diane, for patiently enduring long periods of neglect during the research and compilation of this book.

The author apologises for any errors, misrepresentations or omissions that may be discovered in the content of this work. Any known will be corrected in future Re-prints.

Back Cover - The range of Nestle Chilled Desserts being produced at Staverton Factory in 1997.

The Author

Pete Lavis was employed by the Nestle Company at Staverton for 35 years, the latter 28 of these in Supervisory and Management positions in the factory's Crosse & Blackwell Culinary products Plant. Born at Bath in 1941, he moved to Wiltshire in 1944 and after primary school was educated at Trowbridge Boys High School. He joined Nestle at Staverton in 1960, moved into the village in 1964 after marrying a local girl and Staverton still remains the family home. His early career at the factory involved gaining experience in most departments of the Milk Condensery, this leading to promotion to Packing Room Foreman in 1967 when the newly opened Culinary Products Plant began operations. He subsequently became a Production Supervisor, Assistant Plant Manager and finally Culinary Production Manager in 1989. He left the Company in 1995 when the Crosse & Blackwell Plant was closed down and now uses his 'retirement' time in a number of community roles and on his numerous hobbies which include researching local history, photography, videofilming, model making, reading and foreign travel. During the latter years of his career at the factory he became Staverton's news correspondent for the Company paper and his prolific supply of material for publication in Nestle News earned him the Correspondent of the Year Award in 1992. His interest in Company and local history led to his involvement in looking after the considerable factory historical archives which he later collated, catalogued and ensured their preservation by arranging for their deposit in the County Records Office.



Pete retains close links with the factory, continues to look after the archive material and regularly gives Nestle history talks to local groups. He has researched several local history subjects, is Chairman of the Parish Council, a School Governor, helps to look after the village church and is actively involved in other village groups. He is currently researching the histories of the village, St. Paul's Church and the Village School and hopes to publish material on these subjects at a future date.



Staverton Factory at night.



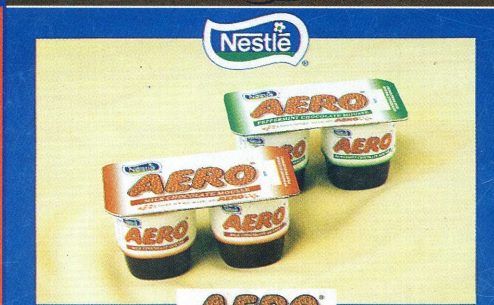
Rolo
melted



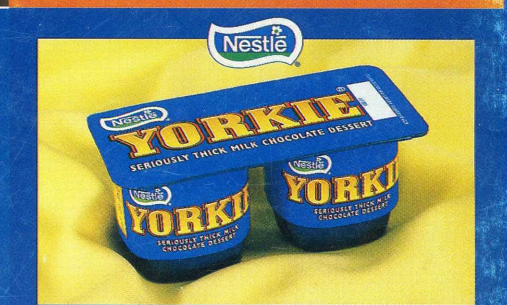
Toffee Crisp



Munchies



AERO



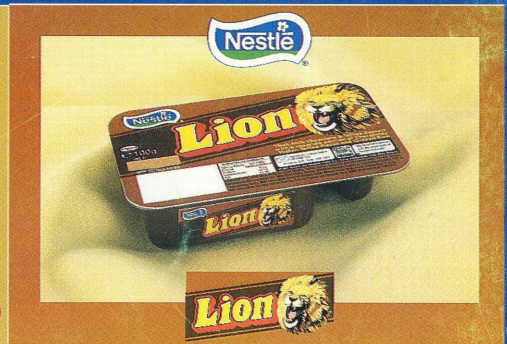
YORKIE



REAL FRUIT
NO ARTIFICIAL COLOURS OR FLAVOURS



AERO
Cappuccino



Lion



After Eight
melted



Real
Chocolate Mousse



One Hundred and One
cute bundles
of fun!

LOL
DALMATIANS

Strawberry Flavour
Yoghurt
Vanilla Flavour
Shiraz
Chocolate Orange
Shiraz
Vanilla Flavour
Yoghurt
Chocolate Orange
Shiraz
Chocolate
Orange
Shiraz
Chocolate
Orange
Shiraz



AERO
Super Light



YORKIE



Nestlé