

last look round

Rural reality

In the sunny days of summer the City worker looks longingly at those leafy advertisements from the Location of Offices Bureau, and wonders as he sweats his way through town what it must be like to work in an office set in the heart of the country. Well, in the B&C group we have a large body of people who could tell you from many years' first hand experience.

They are the staff of Cayzer Steel Bowater Ltd., formerly Cayzer Steel Brothers, who run a major part of their widespread insurance interests from Hartridge House, Cranbrook, Kent.

Many B&C people must be familiar with the line drawing of Hartridge House that has been used on cards showing strangers the way there. In the artist's impression it looks like the set for a television production of a Jane Austen story: can it really be like that, you ask yourself? Surely, in the life, you'd find that the garden hedge borders a thundering by-pass road thick with juggernauts, while the outhouse wall conceals a petrochemical works oozing perpetual sludge?

Not a bit of it. Beyond the trim lawn and hedges lie 19 acres of grounds, complete with fishing lake. And the house is well away from the nearest main road, the not-too-busy A229 (about three miles from Cranbrook itself). Our pictures show how close the reality is to the artist's image.

There, about 60 CSB staff operate accounts, administration, aviation, marine and claims departments. It is a good place to be, but there are snags. For those who do not come by private car, movements are dictated by the timing of four company-run minibuses, for instance. There are no cafes or department stores just down the road.

The handsome brick-built house, in Queen Anne style, was finished in 1913 for a member of the Hoare banking family. They sold it to a Mr. Clarke of Foster Clarke's fame (remember their custard?). He sold it about 18 years ago to J. K. Secar & Co., who merged into the B&C group. J. K. Secar were somewhat ahead of their time in being one of the first brokers to move out into the country. Of course, they were told they were mad.

The house remains very much as it was when artist D. C. Cameron (not one of the group's staff) did the familiar pen and ink impression, a few years ago. One point of special interest was drawn to CLANSMAN's attention by our contact I. M. Wilkinson. Though the house was built in 1913, the garden appears on Ordnance Survey maps dated 1911—indicating that the thoughtful owner may have planned his landscape first, then set his house in the middle of it.

CLANSMAN



■ At Cayzer Steel Bowater's Cranbrook offices, the rural reality matches the image. Above: pen and ink drawing by D. C. Cameron; below, photograph by J. C. Tandy. See first item, this page.



Our photograph of the ivy-clad garden front, rather difficult to take without a wide-angle lens and a tall stepladder, is by J. C. Tandy, now in the CSB offices at Throgmorton House—yes, back in the City.

In steam again

When steam's last main railway line in the UK gave up to electric traction in the mid-sixties, British Rail sold one of the surviving steam express locos for preservation. The locomotive was the southern region number 35028 *Clan Line* and her new owners were the Merchant Navy Locomotive Preserva-

tion Society.

Now, after years of loving restoration work by members of the society, *Clan Line* is successfully in steam again. On April 27 she made her first public run since restoration—a southern rail tour starting from Basingstoke.

J. N. Rickard (accounts, Greenly House) was among B&C people who made the pilgrimage. He sent us this personal report:

"The combination of interest in the company and steam locomotion made the running of the locomotive named after the *Clan Line* an irresistible attraction. On