

In 1914 Walsall Town Council together with the Chamber of Commerce, The Tradesmen's Association and the Rotary Club conceived the idea of a Walsall shopping festival to promote retail business in the town. The event had to be postponed however due to the outbreak of war.

In 1923 plans were resurrected and the festival was organised to take place between November 2nd and 10th of that year. To commemorate the event a booklet

was published which in addition to advertising local businesses included sections on Walsall's past, present, and future.

By 1923 John Crabtree's rapidly expanding business was firmly established in the town and he had commenced the building of Lincoln Works. As a prominent member of the Rotary Club of Walsall it is perhaps not surprising therefore that John became heavily involved with arrangements for the Walsall shopping festival as chairman of its publicity and booklet committee and a member of its general festival committee.

His achievements as a businessman, engineer and artist are well documented in this book. His was a brilliant, analytical mind capable not only of dealing with day to day matters but also of looking to the future and predicting with accuracy both economic and social trends. As his contribution to the Walsall shopping festival booklet John applied his subtle sense of humour in compiling a "tongue in cheek" Walsall Future section predicting aspects of life in the town in 2023, one hundred years into the future. He also used his artistic talent to make amusing sketches to illustrate his predictions.

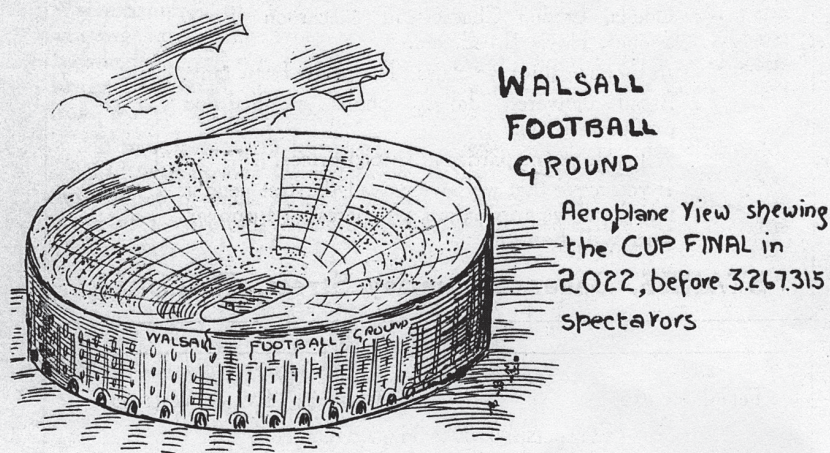
A number of these humorous pages from the booklet are reproduced here. How many of these predictions could become reality is left to the reader to ponder !!!!!.....

## WALSALL FUTURE

By J. A. C.

### WALSALL IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND AND TWENTY-THREE

*Being an Extract from the "Walsall Observer," Nov. 2nd, 2023.*



It is now seventy-five years since the Walsall Football Club first won the English Cup. It will be remembered that the final was played at Wembley Park, ninety-two thousand spectators going from Walsall alone.

Since this date the Cup has been brought home to Walsall twelve times. The new Walsall football ground shewn in our illustration is believed to be the largest in the world. It is decidedly larger than the stadium in New York, and in the Cup Final last year provided ample accommodation for over three million spectators. Admittance is made through 523 turnstiles, and takes three hours to fill and five minutes to empty.

During the passage of the last one hundred years the industries of Walsall have altered considerably. The invention of chemical milk and its universal adoption has led to the practical extinction of the very interesting animal known by our forefathers as "the cow." The leather manufacturers and tanners of Walsall being dependent upon the hides of this and other extinct animals for their raw material, had to turn to the production of these hides by chemical methods, in consequence of which Walsall has become the centre of the Synthetic Leather Industry.



## WALSALL FUTURE



The magnificent Municipal Buildings illustrated in our pages were built in the year 1975 from the plans of Mr. C. O. M. Pass, a leading Walsall architect of the day, and the view from the Tower is said to cover a radius of 365 miles, atmosphere permitting. On fine nights it is even possible to see as far as the moon. The style of architecture is known as "Passant," and in order to strengthen the foundation for so massive a building, it was found necessary to fill up many subterranean lime pits with solid concrete. The culminating tower of this impressive building is said to be copied from the Campanile which graced the original Council House building. The lower storeys of the Municipal Building are used as a municipal garage with lifts and storage facilities for one hundred thousand cars. This was necessary in order to comply with the Act of Parliament passed in the year 1964, which laid down the principle that every business establishment, factory or workshop should include ample accommodation for storage of motor vehicles in the proportion two to every person employed therein.

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Contemporary with the extinction of the cow we had the tremendous growth of motor traffic, which also led to the dying out of "the horse." This led to the leather manufacturers of Walsall examining other outlets for their products, with the result that Walsall New Leather was discovered and masticated is considered in the best circles to be an excellent substitute for beefsteak.

In the year 1935 the passenger train service between Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Walsall was completely electrified, the electric trains working in a circle from the tube station below Stevenson Square, Birmingham, and running in a circle through Oldbury, Dudley, Wolverhampton, Walsall, and back to Birmingham. It is now possible to get from Walsall to Birmingham in eight minutes by this service.

It is surprising to learn that our forefathers in the year 1923 were satisfied with express trains between Walsall and Birmingham which did the journey of eight miles in twenty minutes. This works out at the speed of twenty-four miles an hour, which seems ridiculous in these modern days.



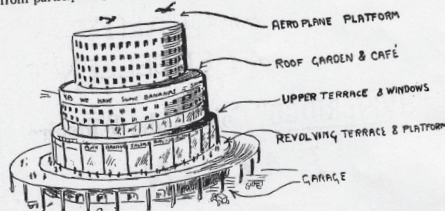
LOWER BRIDGE STREET.

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## WALSALL FUTURE

arrangement has worked admirably and is now generally adopted throughout the country.

In view of the large area covered by the city and the growth of the council, it has been found necessary to supply each councillor with a megaphone in order that he may make himself heard, in addition to which each candidate for the council before nomination, must satisfy a committee consisting of the Town Clerk, the Gas Manager, and the Mayors in office, that he possesses sufficient vocal powers to make himself audible through a megaphone at a distance of 1760 yards. This necessary test has, however, the unfortunate result of disqualifying many of our citizens from participating in our local government.



"ABLEWELL HOUSE"

NEW PREMISES OF R. E. TAIL ESQ.

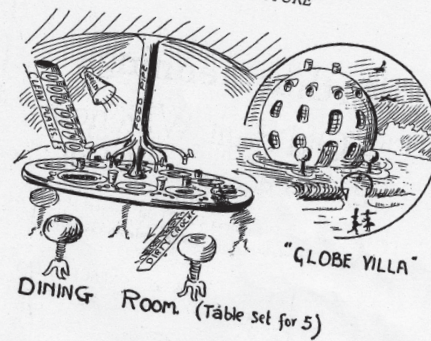
C. O. M. Pass  
Architect

The shop windows of Walsall are among the sights of the town. They are built on the first storey of each building having a wide footpath outside adjoining the moving platform which runs down into the main street. In order that the shopkeepers may shew the maximum number of wares to the passer-by, each shop window is in the form of a circular drum of plate-glass, which is continually revolving. This arrangement is not altogether as successful as was first anticipated, as it takes twenty-five minutes for the shop window to revolve, and cases have been known where crowds have congregated outside the shop awaiting for some particular costume to revolve again into view. To overcome this difficulty one of our leading traders, Mr. R. E. Tail, is rebuilding his establishment so that the whole of his shop window will have a revolving platform six feet wide which will revolve with the window, thereby enabling shoppers to be carried around the window and therefore give a full examination to any goods which interest them.

Mr. R. E. Tail has kindly allowed us to shew an illustration of his new premises as they will appear when completed.

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## WALSALL FUTURE



This tendency towards revolution, so apparent in our modern shops and the Council Chamber, has even invaded our homes. It has become the fashion to have all houses and furniture as circular as possible. Nowhere is it better exemplified than in the new residence recently erected for our well-known townsman, Mr. W. A. L. Sail. He has kindly permitted us to shew an illustration of the exterior of this most interesting house, "Globe Villa," together with one of his dining rooms. It will be observed that the dining table is supported from the roof by a circular rod, down which is carried the various pipes from the kitchen for conveying the various meat extracts, chemical milk, synthetic sugar, and the glauber salts for every meal. The plates pass under each tap in turn from the right of the diner, the dirty dishes being carried away to his left and are then passed through the electric washer, and re-fed back through the return shoot in readiness for the next meal.

[Editorial Note.—We are afraid that our Contributor has allowed his imagination to run riot, and we would therefore recommend that our readers do not accept these prophecies in too serious a vein.]

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