

Contact

April 1981



"New Supershop"
(see page 64)

FIRST CIVIC SHIELDS

All-Electric Council Homes

THE progressive Alyn and Deeside District Council has become the first local authority in the MANWEB area to build energy-saving homes to a standard which qualifies them for the electricity supply industry's Civic Shield Award.

They have two sites with housing in the course of construction, one at Connahs Quay in our Dee Valley District and the other at Buckley in our Clwyd District.

On the latter development, 19 bungalows are being erected, specifically for old-age pensioners. Each home will be heated by four Creda TSR storage radiators, and Pactrol temperature controls will govern the input to the heaters and so help keep the fuel cost at a reasonable level. Hursel towel-rails provide warmth in the bathrooms and hot water is supplied through 50-gallon capacity Welmade twin-heater combination cylinders. The contract for MANWEB is worth about £15,000.

For the ten flats being built on the Connahs Quay site, our Dee Valley District is providing 46 Creda TSR radiators, ten each of Chidlow panel-heaters, Hursel towel-rails, Pactrol controls and Welmade 50-gallon combination cylinders at a total cost of nearly £10,000.

Both contracts were obtained through the initial efforts of our Dee Valley District energy sales team at a seminar for builders and local authorities held in Chester some time ago. Our Clwyd staff kept the

information flowing, when they took a party of Council officials to view some experimental houses at the Capenhurst Research Centre.

Shortly after this, a letter to all Councils introduced the new Creda TSR and explained how this heater would counter, quite adequately, all previous objections to the efficiency and running-costs of electric storage radiators.

Our energy sales staff, Messrs. Trevor Edwards (*1st engineer*) and Tony Patrick (*design engineer*), of Dee Valley, together with Mr. Colin Edwards (*2nd engineer*), of Clwyd, are following through on these two pilot schemes. They are enjoying helpful co-operation from District Council officials Mr. Donald Box (*Building Services Officer*), and project architect Mr. Paul Kent and his colleague Mr. Mike Higgins.

A successful relationship has always existed between the two organisations. This is well illustrated with last year's figure of nearly 300 Electricaire units installed by MANWEB in properties controlled by Alyn and Deeside District Council.

Long may the friendship continue!

THE SCHEME

The Civic Award Scheme for energy-saving homes encourages local authorities to make the best use of ratepayers' money by providing well-insulated houses designed to use economic electric heating. The scheme applies to new homes and upgraded existing dwellings.

An integral part of the scheme is the advice available from Electricity Boards from the design stage to installation of the insulation, electrical systems and services.

The tenant, too, is offered help with demonstrations on the economical and efficient running of electrical appliances in the home.

USING ENERGY WISELY

Wasteful use of energy in British homes is criticised in a new film, "Using Our Energy Wisely". The film explains that they could save 20 per cent on their fuel bills by insulating their lofts and hot-water cylinders which, together with some draught-insulation, would make their homes more comfortable than they are now.

The film also highlights the high standards of insulation against heat losses achieved in *Medallion Homes* and *Civic Shield* housing schemes,

where the insulation standards are 40 per cent higher than those required by the current building regulations. Tenants of a North British Housing Association development, which has been awarded a Civic Shield, claim savings of up to half their heating bills.

Other examples of the wise use of energy include heat pumps installed in Mothercare shops, which provide two and a half times more energy—in the form of usable heat from the atmosphere—than they consume in electricity to power them. A heat-recovery system

installed by Marks and Spencer recovers waste heat from freezer cabinets and uses it to heat water for the canteen dishwasher.

The responsible approach of the electricity supply industry to the national need for making better use of energy resources is underlined in the film, with an invitation to industrial and commercial users to consult electricity board engineers early in the planning stage of new projects.

"Using Our Energy Wisely" runs for 21 minutes and is available on 16mm film with optical sound on free loan from the Electricity Council Film Library, 30 Millbank, London SW1P 4RD.

Contact

THE STAFF MAGAZINE
OF THE
MERSEYSIDE AND
NORTH WALES
ELECTRICITY BOARD

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On other pages...

Training Review	64
Mid-Mersey District Long-Service	65
H.V. Seminar	66
Clwyd District Long-Service	67
Industrial Energy Costs	68
Talking Notes	70
Obituary	72
Southport Catering Exhibition	73
Broseley Warmahomes	74
Aberystwyth Long-Service	76
Dee Valley Long-Service	76
Bridge Crossing, Dolgellau	77
Retirements	78
Mailing Room	80

DON'T BLAME US!

WHEN something upsets the smooth running of our lives, it is a natural human reaction to look around for someone—or something—to blame for our troubles.

A householder, incensed by a high electricity bill, may feel inclined to blanket the whole electricity board with blame—from the innocent who read the meter to the unimpeachable clerk who sent the account. Even the “heartless” computer comes in for its share of the “kick the cat” response.

During the past year there has been an increasing tendency for beleaguered British industry to blame the rising cost of fuel in general, and of electricity in particular, for many of its problems. Claims that some of our manufacturers are fighting the battle in the exports market while handicapped by energy costs higher than those of their foreign competitors have made more than a few headlines.

The problems of our industrial customers, large and small, are a matter of great concern to MANWEB—an electricity board which is more dependent than most on the economic health of industrial enterprises within its borders. The rights and wrongs of this complex subject of industrial electricity prices is important to us all.

This number of *'Contact'* carries an explanatory article by tariffs expert John Roberts, which does much to clear the fog generated by over-simplification of a not-so-simple subject. A study of this welcome contribution to our pages reveals that MANWEB is in no way the villain of the piece, but rather that we are doing everthing the law allows us to do to advise and help our industrial customers in an understandably difficult period.

Editorial

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Please let the Editorial staff know of any large-scale or unusual engineering schemes or commercial projects going on in your department. We are interested in people too! Contact us about your interesting personalities with a story to tell.

TRAINING REVIEW — 1980

by Mr. Dick Storer
*Executive Officer
Education and Training*

IT IS the job of the Education and Training section to make sure that as many MANWEB staff as possible get the maximum benefit from our training policies. Better qualifications and expertise mean that we are more valuable to the Board, increase our chances of promotion and improve our service to the public.

At some time during 1980, you may have noticed a fellow hiding behind a beard and dark glasses, making copious notes on a clip-board. That was me—attempting to find out how effectively we are carrying out the MANWEB training policies and looking for staff opinions about our future training needs.

I spent several days in each District, carrying out what came to be known as "Training Reviews". For the record, discussions took place with more than 250 members of the staff, including managerial, N.J.B., clerical supervisors, foremen and others.

As a result of these talks, the following policies have been put into action:—

- ☆ Better arrangements for "induction training" for clerical and industrial staff. In some Districts, industrial staff now attend formal induction courses.
- ☆ More job-rotation, to give staff the chance to broaden their experience and improve promotion prospects.
- ☆ Some Districts are producing check lists for new clerical staff to help identify future needs.
- ☆ Efforts are to be made to make wider use of existing training aids.

In addition, a number of recommendations have been dealt with through formal channels—for example, the Deputy Chief Engineer and the Education and Training Officer are setting up a working party to review the Student Engineer training programmes.

Several suggestions for improving future training courses for supervisors have been noted. For example, recently-appointed foremen stressed



the need for them to have supervisory training. As a result, two courses, designed to cater for the needs of foremen with less than five years' supervisory experience, were organised.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this Training Review, even though the discussions may have disrupted your patterns of work. Those I spoke to gave their opinions honestly and without fear or favour. Such criticisms as were voiced were constructive, and they form a helpful basis for future Education and Training activity.

KNOCK, KNOCK!

In a telephone call to our North Mersey District office, a customer requested that a collector call at his home.

Stating that he was confined to a wheelchair, he added: "*Could you ask the collector to knock and wait, because my mother is in Scotland and it will take quite a while to get to the door.*"

We are indebted to Mr. Dave Findley from the Pre-payments section for this little gem.

NEW SUPERSHOP IN WREXHAM

OUR COVER PICTURE shows shop supervisor Mr. Tom Evans welcoming our "Girl from MANWEB" Miss Rosemary Tomlinson on the occasion of her visit to the new supershop in Wrexham, which opened on 3rd April. Good business is reported. Full picture coverage will be featured in the next issue of 'Contact'.

40-YEAR MEN

Group Manager Mr. Norman Maden (*extreme right*), congratulates 40-year staff, from left to right: Messrs. Harry Dumbell (*1st engineer—System*), Arthur E. Bold (*installation inspector*), Albert R. Cooper (*District Engineer*), Albert R. Lovelady (*installation inspector*) and Fred O. Clague (*joiner*). Missing from the picture was Mr. John Worth (*1st engineer—system*).



Long - Service Staff in our Mid - Mersey District



20-YEAR STAFF

Mr. Glyn Norbury (*District Commercial Engineer*), *extreme right*, with 20-year staff, from left to right: Messrs. Roy Bennett (*electrician*), Lew Carter (*2nd engineer—Installation*) and J. Alan Brown (*chargehand meter reader/collector*). Other 20-year recipients were Messrs. Ron Garvey (*joiner*), Wilf E. Greenway (*labourer*) and Walter Lomax (*meter reader/collector*).

Management officers join a group of Mid-Mersey District's 30-year staff pictured here, from left to right: Messrs. Dennis Hodgetts (*District Administrative Officer*), Bob Johnson (*sub-station attendant—retired*), Thomas E. Owen (*mechanical fitter*), James Tart (*electrician*) and Len Keogh (*foreman—Engineering*), Mrs. Margaret Ward (*administrative assistant*), Messrs. Reg Bramhall (*foreman—Commercial*), Norman Maden (*Group Manager*) and Arthur Houghton (*joiner*), Mrs. Jean Seddon (*administrative assistant*), Messrs. Thomas Fillingham (*foreman—Civil Trades*), Alfred Houghton (*installation inspector—retired*) and Geoffrey Lamb (*1st engineer—System*). Unable to attend the ceremony were Messrs. Gordon G. Duffy (*joiner's mate*), Vince Flanagan (*2nd engineer—Production*), John McNally (*craftsman's mate*) and Clifford Norcross (*linesman's mate*).



High Voltage Seminar in our North Mersey District

Delegates enjoy packed programme

A SUCCESSFUL seminar on the safety aspects of high-voltage supplies was held at the Blundellsands hotel in our North Mersey District a short time ago.

An excellent attendance of 55 representatives from local organisations was met—at nine o'clock in the morning!—by two charming and attractive hostesses.

The meeting was then opened by Mr. Albert Eyres (*District Engineer*) who introduced the first speaker, Mr. Vic Heard, MANWEB's Safety Officer. He spoke of the variety of regulations in force and of the Board and customer



Above, from left to right: Messrs. Albert Eyres, A. Lelleat and T. Roberts (Norwest Holst Ltd.) and John E. Young. Below, from left to right: Messrs. A. Moreland (Alexandra Silos Ltd.), W. McDauid (Metal Box Ltd.), David J. Burstow and Vic Heard.



responsibilities.

Then Mr. David J. Burstow, Senior Electrical Inspector of the Health and Safety Executive, talked about the special electricity regulations applicable to high-voltage customers.

A break for coffee followed, before Mr. John Walker (*Energy Sales Engineer*) deputised for a guest speaker, Mr. Alec Fraser (*Electrical Engineer, Cortaulds Ltd.*) who was unable to attend. Mr. Walker gave an abridged version of Mr. Fraser's talk, giving an

industrialist's point of view.

Just before lunch, Mr. John Young (*Principal Engineer*), from Head Office, spoke on the modernisation of high-voltage switchgear.

He was followed by Mr. Les Appleton (*Installation Engineer*), who gave his audience an insight into MANWEB's customer service.

An interesting question and answer session kept the brisk pace of the seminar in full swing until the delegates and their hosts broke for some well-earned refreshments and lunch.

Miss Rosemary Tomlinson (*"The Girl from MANWEB"*) joins Miss Margaret Boyle (*demonstrator*) to add the feminine touch.



From left to right: Messrs. John A. Walker, Les Appleton, Harry Vale (Midland Bank Computer Centre), Ken Appleton (District Commercial Engineer) and John Mazey (Midland Bank Computer Centre).





Group Manager Mr. Glyn Dodd, centre, with some of the Clwyd District long-service award recipients.

Years of Loyal Service from Clwyd District Staff

A LOVELY day at St. Asaph heralded the ceremony to present long-service certificates to members of our Clwyd District staff. Mr. Glyn Dodd (Group Manager) welcomed everyone to the proceedings—especially the ladies, and particularly those who were to receive certificates in their own right.

He said that, during 1980, staff in the District qualifying for awards had amassed a total of 830 years' service. Paying his personal tribute to each and every one receiving certificates, he took the opportunity, on behalf of the Board, publicly to thank the staff concerned.

Speaking of the changes which had taken place in

our industry over the years, he mentioned the introduction of nationalisation in 1948, and the massive rural development programme tackled very shortly afterwards. "This programme was the largest single factor in raising the standard of life in North Wales," he commented.

Mr. Dodd said that there had been a number of variations in the MANWEB organisation and, even now, more changes were taking place.

"Technological and computer applications will continually affect every member of the staff in one way or another," he went on.

Referring to the current recession and its effect on our sales of appliances and contracting work, he assured his audience by saying: "The Board's policy is that there shall be no redundancies. Natural wastage will take care of changes in the workload. We are indeed fortunate to work in an industry with a future."

He forecast that the recession would "bottom-out" and urged that we should all be prepared for the "upturn" in business. "Our industry acts as a certain barometer of the country's economy—therefore we will be the first to know of any changes."

Mr. Dodd then wished all the long-service staff and their families every happiness in the future, as he presented the certificates.

The Awards

40 YEARS: Messrs. Humphrey E. Davies (*switch-board attendant*), Morris Evans (*installation inspector*), William H. Hughes (*foreman, Engineering*) and Thomas Lee (*shop supervisor*).

30 YEARS: Messrs. Dennis Atkinson (*principal assistant—Admin.*) and Ronald Carter (*Energy Sales Engineer*), Miss Marvina Frazer Davies (*salesperson*), Messrs. Edward J. Edwards (*principal assistant—Accounts*), Mervyn H. Evans (*chargehand linesman*), Brian Griffiths (*Commercial Supply Engineer*), George E. Jackson (*meter reader*), Austin Jones (*electrician*), F. Eric Keen (*storekeeper*), Angus C. Macdonald

(*administrative assistant*), John W. A. Pritchard (*linesman*), Edward I. Roberts (*foreman, Engineering*), Eric Roberts (*foreman, Commercial*), Thomas C. Roberts (*storekeeper—retired*) and Reginald Williams (*electrician*).

20 YEARS: Mrs. Gladys T. Evans (*cleaner*), Messrs. Ivan C. Evans (*jointer's mate*), Edwin P. Fagan (*driver*), Brian James (*chargehand labourer*), Peter G. Jones (*electrician*), Richard W. Jones (*meter reader*), William H. Parry (*labourer*), Rodney W. Taylor (*2nd engineer—System*), Elfed Thomas (*electrician*), Kenneth B. Thomas (*electrician*) and Miss Dorothy A. Wheelwright (*clerical assistant*).

Setting the record straight on

Industrial Energy Costs

By JOHN ROBERTS (*Assistant Chief Commercial Officer—Tariffs and Statistics*)

DURING recent months there has been widespread publicity about the effect higher energy costs are having on British industry, particularly on the ability of exporters to compete in foreign markets. The high cost of energy has often been linked with the high value of sterling as the twin evils that are dragging down British industry. A lot of information has been published which seeks to show just how overpriced energy is in this country, particularly in comparison with Western Europe.

The first and most difficult point to deal with is the question of international comparisons. It is difficult because there are many problems, when considering the cost of electricity in this country and abroad, in comparing like with like in terms of supply voltages, supply capacity and terms of agreement. There have been a number of attempts recently to grapple with this problem and several studies have been published comparing our prices with those of our Western European competitors.

When the question of supply voltage and size has been sorted out, and the cost of supply to similar loads is compared, then, in general terms, UK prices fall into the middle range of Western European prices in the vast majority of cases. When you allow for the fact that the pound is over-valued (due largely to our high interest rates and resources of oil) by something like 20 per cent, it is quite clear that our prices compare favourably. However, at the "top end", for very large supplies, there is little doubt that some countries do offer terms which are particularly favourable—for example, France and West Germany. There is evidence in these cases that a few large industrial customers are given particularly preferential terms, either at the expense of smaller customers or through Government subsidies. For example, the French Government wrote-off a £1,400 million capital charge in 1979 and the French Electricity Authority also made a substantial trading loss.

In addition, both France and West Germany enjoy certain advantages which are not available in this country. The Germans have supplies of cheap brown coal for their power stations, whilst in France hydroelectric and nuclear power (both low-cost energy sources) provide five times as much electricity compared with England and Wales.

Clearly it is not sufficient to sit back complacently and say that as long as we are more or less on a par with other Western European countries that everything must be all right and there is nothing else we need do to help our industrial customers. We must do



John Roberts.

all that we can to ensure that they get a fair deal from the electricity industry.

The first point to remember, of course, is that we have a statutory obligation not to show undue preference to any one customer or group of customers to the disadvantage of others. Therefore, we have to try to construct our tariffs so that all the prices that we charge our customers are a fair reflection of the cost of supplying them with electricity.

We do this by examining the load characteristics of our different types of customers, by relating to each class of customer the relevant costs of supply, and hence formulating a set of tariffs which offers a reasonable range of options which are sufficient to suit most users. For the majority of industrial customers, electricity does not form a substantial proportion of costs and, for the most part in fact, is less than ten per cent of added value. However, there are some industries in which this is not the case, and to which we devote special attention. For example—steel, paper and board, some types of chemicals, glass-making, cement manufacturing and gas production. In these cases—very large customers, where electricity costs are particularly significant—the Board offers tariffs which are specifically designed to meet the individual requirements of individual customers. This often means producing very complicated tariffs, which give the customers the opportunity to control their industrial processes so that they are using electricity in the most effective way.

For a few of our very large supplies, we offer special rates which give favourable terms to those customers who can reduce the demand they place on our system at relatively short notice. These reductions in load offer considerable savings to the Supply Industry, because they can be used to ease the strain on the system at times of unacceptable plant shortage. Further Load Management refinements of this particular tariff are presently being considered, and will be offered to

Continued on page 69

some customers in 1981/82, thereby making further savings possible.

Whilst we do all we can to minimise the impact of price rises by tailoring our tariffs to meet our customers' requirements as far as possible, there is a financial limit to the amount of help that we can give. This limit is imposed by the Board by, on the one hand, the increase in the Supply Industry's costs which are incurred in producing electricity in the first place, and, on the other hand, by the financial targets which have been set for us by the Government.

These financial targets involve the amount of profit which we have to earn over the three-year period which ends in March 1983, and a limit on the amount of money which we can borrow in any one year. So far as the industry's costs are concerned, the price of oil rose very sharply in 1979, mainly as a result of the Iranian Revolution, and has risen steeply during 1980, helped along by the effects of the Iran/Iraq War. We have also recently had a rise in coal prices reflecting the miners' pay settlement.

Other prices, such as salary costs and other materials and services, have been rising more or less in line with inflation, and the combined effect has been a steady increase in our costs in excess of the general rate of inflation. A considerable proportion of these price rises has been absorbed by increases in the industry's own efficiency, but the effect of Government financial targets does not enable us to absorb them all.

In many ways the Supply Industry finds itself caught in the middle, between rising costs on the one hand and increasingly stringent financial targets on the other. Inevitably, something has to give, and, in this case, our only way of balancing the books is to continue to improve our operating efficiency and hence reduce our costs, and to increase our prices.

In order to help industry, MANWEB has a team of highly-trained specialist industrial sales engineers. As part of their job of promoting the efficient use of electricity in industry, they spend a large proportion of their time visiting industrial customers and advising them on how they can get the best value for money from the industrial use of electricity. Savings can be made by using more energy-efficient processes, by using better methods which reduce waste or increase productivity and by improving production schedules to take advantage of low-cost off-peak electricity.

In the final analysis, we have to recognise that the days of cheap energy finished nearly ten years ago when OPEC began to flex its muscles. We are now in an era of high energy costs and there is no possibility of a return to the "gas guzzling" days of the Fifties and Sixties. These are facts of life with which we have to live. Although we are subjected to considerable criticism, we have, as an industry, a record of continued improvement in productivity and efficiency which takes a lot of beating. We must continue to do all we can to help our customers, especially in these difficult economic days.

A Powerful Future

The outlook for the development of the fast breeder nuclear reactor was summed up in the following words by Sir Francis Tombs, recently-retired Chairman of the Electricity Council, speaking to the Institution of Nuclear Engineers recently:

"The slowing down of the world's thermal reactor programme, together with increased exploration, has pushed away the prospect of uranium shortage and has made price forecasts fall at a time when capital costs of the breeder reactor are rising. As a result, the break-even point seems to move steadily away from us.

"But we really cannot go on using only one per cent of scarce uranium, when we have at our disposal a machine which can burn all of it. A whole new range of public apprehensions exist here, from the notion

of the plutonium economy to the mistaken belief that a breeder reactor can explode like an atomic bomb. The same process of patient explanation, coupled with reference to the experience and experiments will have to be developed as we have done for thermal reactors.

"Perhaps we should stop calling it a fast breeder reactor. Fast implies speed, and speed implies danger. Breeding is surely out of fashion in this birth-controlled world of ours. Why should we not call it the high efficiency converter reactor and point out that, as well as breeding plutonium, it can consume it and minimise the stocks of that fissile material being built up from our thermal reactor programme.

"As to the date of the first breeder, I am on record as forecasting previously a start in 1985.

Because of the general slackness in the world economy, and especially in the rate of nuclear building, I think that this date will now slip to the late 1980s, but I feel sure that a full-scale commercial breeder will be in operation by the late '90s.

"During the remainder of this century, I believe that the established record of nuclear power and its gradual acceptance will enable the world to move forward steadily, and I am particularly happy that in the UK, where our ample reserves of fossil fuels at the present-day are accompanied by a recognition that we shall soon again be an energy-importing nation, has decided to proceed with a nuclear programme of modest, determined size.

"The tasks ahead for all branches of the UK nuclear industry are challenging and rewarding ones. The experience of the last 25 years will equip us to deal with them satisfactorily."



TRAIL-BLAZING LADY

MAKING history as far as MANWEB is concerned is former Mayor of Chester **Mrs. Sheila Garston**, recently appointed by the Secretary of State as the first woman member of the MANWEB Board.

Mrs. Garston, who moved to Chester from South Wales as a child, is well-known throughout Chester for her active and successful career in local government affairs. She first became a Parish Councillor at Upton-by-Chester in 1966 and, in the following year, was elected a member of the Chester Rural District Council. In 1972 she had a particularly busy year, being chairman of both Councils at the same time.

After local government reorganisation, she was elected to the new Chester City Council, and was Mayor of the City during the Queen's Silver Jubilee Year—1977-78. At present, she is

chairman of the City's Housing Committee and also sits on the Policy Committee.

Outside of local politics, Mrs. Garston is active in other spheres of public life. She is a member of the executive committee of the Chester Citizens' Advice Bureau, chairman of the Dorin Park School for Physically Handicapped Children at Upton, and a member of the governing bodies of other local schools and the Upton Sports Centre.

Mrs. Garston is a keen sports-woman, being a former County hockey player, a tennis enthusiast and, latterly, a struggling golfer! She also enjoys amateur dramatics.

Her appointment to the MANWEB Board is not her first experience of our industry, as she was formerly a member of the Area Electricity Consultative Council—an appointment she has now resigned on joining the Board.

Married, with a grown-up son, she lives at Upton in the centre of her area of public activities.

Baby for Eve

Our heartiest congratulations go to former "Girl from MANWEB" **Eve Townley**, who gave birth to a lovely baby girl, Leanne Sarah, weighing in at 7 lb. 10 ozs., at Clatterbridge Hospital, on 3rd March.

Eve, who worked as a clerk in our customer records section in North Wirral office, lives at Upton with her husband, Graham.

Lady Captain

After 15 years as a member of the Crewe Golf Club, **Rhona Leedham** was presented with the much-coveted badge of office as Lady Captain, at the annual general meeting of the Club last month.

Rhona, who works as a supervisor of the Engineering clerical section at our Mid-Cheshire District office, plays off a handicap of 27—"It has been lower, and I hope to bring it down again this year," she comments.

Her husband, John, and quite a few of her MANWEB colleagues, are also members of the Crewe Golf Club.

Rhona is "Mum" to two daughters, one married and the other working as a nursing sister in Saudi Arabia.

Mrs. Sheila Garston.



Mrs. Rhoda Leedham.



Electric Home Improvement

The emphasis was on British products at the Electricity Council's Home Improvement Show at the 1981 Ideal Home Exhibition staged at Earls Court. British-designed split-level ovens and hobs and smart free-standing cookers meet the needs of British housewives. All these cookers are easy to clean and have energy-saving ideas, like the grill with two heating elements, only one of which is switched on for cooking a small meal. Continentally-made cookers lack many of these time- and money-saving features. British cookers shown on the Electricity Council's stand ranged from a baby cooker for a bedsit to the very latest, electronically-controlled, split-level, built-in oven and hob for the modern, labour-saving kitchen.

Special-purpose plug-in cookers, including contact grills, slow cookers and multi-cookers, perform their tasks with outstanding economy and efficiency. Several models were shown in use in demonstrations presented by the British Meat Promotions Executive. These easy-to-use plug-in cookers could be bought on the spot at bargain prices by visitors throughout the exhibition period.

A host of home improvement ideas, with economy and efficiency very much in mind, were featured in the Electricity Show presented in a series of sound-and-light presentations.

On The Box

Making his television debut in an interview on the HTV magazine programme "Hamdden" a few weeks ago was **Arfon Thomas**, a chargehand electrician based at Llandudno Junction in our Clwyd District.

After a quick trip to "make-up", he quickly settled down under the bright studio lights and the battery of cameras. He chatted merrily away, in Welsh,



With his array of plugs, fuses and flex, Arfon Thomas handled his first TV interview with Gwenda Griffiths with ease.

to Gwenda Griffiths, who questioned him about electrical circuits in the home, colour codes to follow when wiring a plug and how fuses protect electrical appliances from overload. Arfon illustrated this most dramatically with a practical demonstration of a fuse "blowing". He then went on to explain the capacities of various fuses.

He was introduced as one of the Men from MANWEB and, during his "spot", he mentioned the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contractors and gave a "plug" to the Electrical Association for Women.

Arfon has been with the Board for the past 25 years, working all this time in North Wales. In his younger days, he was active in amateur dramatics. Today, his interest is with the Presbyterian Church of Wales. At his home in Penmaenmawr, he has a few acres of land on which, with the help of his dog Taff, he keeps a few sheep.

He is married to Glenys, and they have a married daughter—living on a farm in Anglesey—and a son who works for the Aberconwy District Council. Arfon is also a grand-dad!

Not So Dear?

Despite all the complaints that electricity is expensive these days, some ancient documents unearthed by colleagues in Aberystwyth District recently seem to show that they aren't quite so unreasonable after all.

The publicity of the former Machynlleth Electric Supply Company Ltd., dated 1934, offers customers a new Two-Part Tariff, based on a fixed charge of 7½ per cent of the rateable value of the house, plus one old penny a unit.

We are sure some statistically-minded reader will correct us if we are wrong, but we think that our latest unit price means that the cost of a unit has increased by about 12 times. In 1934, the average industrial wage was something under £3 a week!

And look at that fixed charge! Taking a very modest house, with a rateable value of perhaps £200—how many of our customers would be pleased with a quarterly fixed charge of £15?

Something About a Soldier

We offer our congratulations to **Beverley Hunt**, a clerk in the mailing and registry section at



Mr. and Mrs. Reid.

(Picture by Ray Rowland)

Head Office, on the occasion of her marriage to James Reid, a soldier with The Gordon Highlanders.

At the wedding ceremony, which took place at the Holy Trinity Church, Chester, last month, the couple were piped from the church by Piper Dunnett of the Caledonian Society.

Beverley and Jim spent their honeymoon touring Scotland.

Within a couple of weeks of their marriage, Jim was off to Belize for a six-month tour of duty. Beverley hopes to join him for a couple of weeks in the summer.

Beverley's mother, Pat, is our Telex operator at Head Office.

Damp Honeymoon

Following their marriage ceremony last month, at St. Mark's Church, Chester, Bryn Morris and

Mr. and Mrs. Morris.



his bride Valerie Ann Roberts honeymooned in Torquay, where it rained all the time!

Bryn, an electrical fitter based at the Chester depot in our Dee Valley District, and Valerie, a secretary in a solicitor's office, have asked us to pass on their grateful thanks to all the engineering and fitting shop staff at the depot who subscribed to their wedding present.

We join with their friends in wishing the young couple many years of happiness ahead.

Bryn's mother, Dorothy, has worked in the Creditors section at Head Office for the past 11 years.

Challenge Match

The late March winds were blustery and drying as golfers from our Mid-Cheshire and Mid-Mersey Districts met at Crewe Golf Course to do battle for the "Glyn Norbury Challenge Shield".

In a closely-fought contest, the home team ran out as the eventual winners by seven points to five—a reversal of last year's score. Among the golfers taking part was Reg. Bramhall, the present captain of the MANWEB Chester S & S Club Golf Section.

The morning greensome proved vital, with Mid-Cheshire winning two and halving one of the matches. The afternoon four-ball better-ball contest was more to the liking of the Mid-Mersey team, who won two and lost one of the matches.

Results (Mid-Cheshire teams first): Morning—Malcolm Cooper and Eric Dean beat Les Butterworth and Glyn Norbury (four and three); Dennis Nicholls and Howard Snape halved with Reg. Bramhall and Alan Brown; Mike Potts and Eddie Hollinshead beat John Hill and Austin Heathwood (four and two).

Afternoon—Malcolm Cooper and Dennis Nicholls lost to Les Butterworth and John Hill (three and two); Howard Snape and Mike Potts lost to Alan Brown

and Glyn Norbury (one hole); Eric Dean and Eddie Hollinshead beat Reg. Bramhall and Austin Heathwood (seven and six).

Mid-Mersey captain Les Butterworth later handed the trophy to Mid-Cheshire captain Malcolm Cooper.

Flat for Sale

Hightown, near Formby, charming first-fl. flat in det. property. Two beds, lounge, dining room, kitchen, bathroom with sep. w.c., garage, easily maintained gardens. Mature residential area in quiet cul-de-sac (Elmcroft Lane). Open rural aspect to rear, 12 miles from Liverpool and eight miles from Southport. £22,000 o.n.o. Tel. 051-929 2772.

House for Sale (Reduced)

Knotty Ash, Liverpool. Det. three-bed house, 18 ft. lounge, kitchen, bath, sep w.c., garage, small gardens, with planning consent for ext., reduced to £22,000 for early completion. Tel. 051-220 2949 after 6 p.m.

OBITUARY

It is with deep regret that we record the following deaths:

Mr. Joseph Antrobus, aged 80, a former public lighting attendant in our Mid-Mersey District.

Mr. Arthur Roberts, aged 78, a joiner's mate at Warrington prior to his retirement.

Miss Muriel Trampleasure, aged 85, who was chief cashier at Northwich until her retirement in 1957.

Mr. Patrick C. Johnson, aged 78, was a clerk in the engineering section at Hatton Garden, Liverpool.

Mr. Giraldu Morris, aged 67, was a clerical assistant in Dee Valley District until his retirement in 1974.

Catering Exhibition at Southport

A **TIMELY** exhibition for caterers was staged by our North Mersey District staff at the Scarisbrick hotel in Southport a short time ago. Its opening was arranged to coincide with the annual general meeting of the Southport Hotel, Guest House and Caterers Association being held at the same venue.

A number of related organisations joined the Board to exhibit their products. These ranged from food suppliers to lighting and audio specialists. MANWEB featured a double display with one large well-designed stand, showing the latest in electric catering equipment and the other exhibiting aspects of the contracting and service side of our business.

District demonstrator Miss Margaret Boyle was

At our Contracting and Service display we see, from left to right: Messrs. Eric Robinson (2nd engineer) and Ron Harper with two of the guest exhibitors.



District demonstrator Miss Margaret Boyle and "Girl from MANWEB" Miss Rosemary Tomlinson entertain visitors to the Board's stand.

kept very busy showing and explaining how the microwave cooker and electric grill cooked snacks to perfection very, very fast indeed.

The whole event was organised and arranged by Mr. Ron Harper (*development engineer, Energy Sales*).

Mr. Gordon Thompson (sales representative), right, holds the attention of customers on our stand.





John Walker outside the Broseley Homes, with negotiators **Lorraine Corbishley**, left, and **Barbara Price**.

BROSELEY WARM HOMES

Timber-frame puts electricity in the picture

THE growing popularity of timber-frame houses is opening up a wider domestic heating market for electricity. The high insulation values in the walls and roof-spaces, which some builders are including in the construction of these homes, reduces heat losses and slashes heating bills.

One such builder is Broseley Estates, one of the largest in the North West, who have just started erecting timber-framed dwellings on their sites. The insulation value installed by Broseley is higher than that required by building regulations and it exceeds the levels set by the Electricity Council for the industry's Medallion Awards Scheme.

At the Broseley Croxteth Park Development, a "green belt" site on the outskirts of Liverpool, they

are building over 3,000 new homes. Included as a standard part of the specifications for the timber-framed houses being constructed on this site, is a special wiring system to take a MANWEB heating and hot water package deal, which the house-buyer can purchase and add to his mortgage.

The heating package was designed by North Mersey District's Roy Roughley, a 2nd engineer. The initial negotiations were by the District's Energy Sales Engineer, John Walker. The builder was using similar specifications on several sites in other MANWEB Districts and in the Norweb area. The whole package was then an inter-District and inter-Board deal, with Head Office Principal Engineer Brian Ogden and heating specialist Keith Hibbert liaising with Norweb's

Broseley sales negotiators pictured with MANWEB staff at a briefing meeting held at the Broseley sales centre on their Croxteth Park Estate, Liverpool, in January this year.



Pictured at the Broseley briefing, left to right, Messrs. Bill Knowles (Sales Manager, Broseley), Brian Ogden (Head Office), Jack Bullough (Broseley Technical Director), Ken Appleton (D.C.E. North Mersey) Roy Roughley and Graham Baker (Site Manager).



Mike Stoddart and completing the negotiations on behalf of both Boards, keeping the Energy Sales teams in various Districts in touch with their deliberations.

There are, in fact, several different heating packages, each designed for a specific Broseley home. Based on the use of the Economy 7 tariff, there are storage radiators to provide background heat in the main living areas, plus a coal-effect fire; panel-heaters in the bedrooms; pull-switch wall-mounted fan-heaters in the bathroom and kitchen; and hot water is included by the provision of a twin-element immersion heater, together with a Horstman control unit. Prices for the package range from approximately £350 for the smallest house to about £600 for the largest.

Running costs for the whole house heating and hot water are expected to be from around £150 per year (under £3 per week) to about £265 (just over £5 per week). The houses range from single-bedroomed to three-bedroomed homes.

Although the present development of timber-frame building is gaining favour in the construction industry, it is nothing new. If you have visited our ancient City of Chester, you will have seen hundreds of them, many 600 or more years old—which says something of their durability. Our Canadian cousins have always used this method of construction—so, too, have the Scandinavians, to combat their severe winters.

Foundations are laid in the same way as for the traditional brick-built house, on to which the builder erects the inner walls, made of timber-frame panels with plywood or fibre-board, which are waterproofed on the outside. These panels are bolted together, floor joists and roofing timbers are installed and the roof is felted and battened. Windows and doors are fixed and the builder then has a waterproof shell in which tradesmen can work, installing wiring, plumbing, etc., whilst the tilers and bricklayers complete the external brick wall skin and tiled roof.

The factory-built panels are assembled on site in a few days, saving site building-time. The panels have 60mm of fibre-glass sandwiched between the ply/fibre-board exterior and the plaster-board inner finish. In the roof-space, a further 120mm of fibre-glass is laid between the ceiling-joists.

The use of plaster-board means no drying-time for

walls, and they can be decorated immediately, and there are no shrinkage cracks to contend with.

Building societies have no reservations about granting mortgages, and insurance companies add no restrictions or penalties. Timber-frame houses are proving a very efficient method of building. They are helping to cut building costs and, by good insulation properties, save on energy bills. The new brick or rendered finishes make these homes indistinguishable from the traditional all-brick construction. They have left the "wooden hut" image behind.

As more builders follow Broseley's lead, so the opportunities grow for electricity to provide clean, efficient heating and hot water at very competitive prices.

A coal-effect electric fire was the centre of attention in the lounge of this Broseley showhouse, until attractive sales negotiator Barbara Price got into the picture.



LONG SERVICE RECOGNISED AT ABERYSTWYTH . .

At a pleasant, informal ceremony a few weeks ago, Mr. Glyn Dodd (*Group Manager*) expressed the Board's appreciation of the many years of loyal service given by staff in our Aberystwyth District. The three management officers introduced the members of their departments who received their certificates from Mr. Dodd.

Award recipients were as follows:-

30 YEARS—Messrs. Reginald Bright (*installation inspector*), Selwyn J. Evans (*Supply Engineer*), Stanley Jones (*labourer*), William Charles Sadler (*joiner*) and Norman L. Whyman (*electrician*).

20 YEARS—Messrs. David Bennion (*Installation Engineer*), Thomas A. Bird (*labourer*), Richard J.



A trio of 30-year men. From left to right: Messrs. W. Sadler, N. L. Whyman and S. J. Evans.

Bryan (*driver*), John W. Connor (*chargehand labourer*), Bryndley W. Davies (*linesman*), Edward W. Edwards (*public lighting attendant—retired*), Harold Jones (*linesman*), Glyn Jones (*linesman*), Glyn P. Jones (*linesman's mate*), Meirion W. Jones (*foreman electrician*), Alan Morris (*meter fixer*), Evan T. Pritchard (*foreman electrician*), David G. Pugh (*joiner*), David R. Pugh (*linesman*), John P. Reed (*linesman*), Dilwyn Thomas (*linesman*), Brian Williams (*linesman*), John E. Williams (*linesman*) and Robert T. Williams (*electrician*).

Recipients of 20-year awards with their Group Manager. From left to right: Messrs. D. G. Pugh, J. P. Reed, A. Morris, D. Bennion, D. H. Dodd, T. A. Bird and D. Thomas.



. . AND DEE VALLEY

Group Manager Mr. Glyn Dodd was again happy to be the presenter of Long-Service Certificates—this time to members of our Dee Valley District staff who had qualified for the various awards. Before making the presentations, Mr. Dodd was given a brief biography of each recipient by the respective District Officers.

The awards were as follows:—

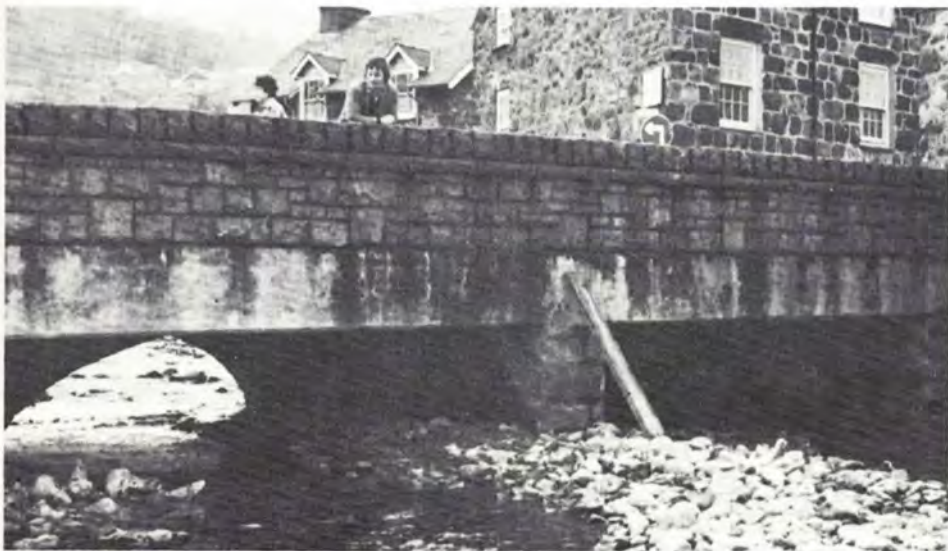
40 YEARS—Messrs. John Stubbs (*electrician*) and Robert Williams (*linesman*).

30 YEARS—Mr. Ken Burden (*driver*), Mrs. Bertha Cunnah (*clerical assistant*), Messrs. J. Mervyn Davies (*clerical assistant*), Wynn Edwards (*clerical assistant*), Cyril H. England (*2nd engineer—Production*) and Tom E. Evans (*shop supervisor*), Mrs. Brenda Harding (*clerical assistant*), Messrs. Morton T. Hughes (*public lighting attendant*), Barry Jones (*2nd engineer—Energy Sales*), Jim Jones (*clerical assistant*), Jack Jordan (*linesman's mate*), Arthur Lovell (*linesman*), Fred

Roberts (*sub-station attendant*), John Wagstaff (*draughtsman*), Len Walley (*administrative assistant*), Gwilym Williams (*sub-station attendant*) and Gwyn Williams (*electrician*).

20 YEARS—Messrs. Frank W. Bailey (*meter reader/collector*), George Brown (*linesman*), Dennis Challoner (*joiner's mate*), David T. Condliffe (*2nd engineer—Supply*), Geoffrey R. Crank (*linesman*), Robert Davies (*linesman*), R. James Davies (*labourer*), Ron James (*electrician*), Paul Mifsud (*electrician*) and Frederick Moran (*meter reader/collector*), Mrs. Beryl Parsons (*sales assistant—retired*), Messrs. Tony Patrick (*3rd engineer—Energy Sales*), Cliff Robinson (*Marketing representative*), John J. Starkey (*fitter's mate*) and G. Elwyn Williams (*joiner*).

We apologise most sincerely to the award recipients for the non-appearance of the 'Contact' photographer at the ceremony. It is our policy to cover as many of these occasions as possible, and the fault in this case was entirely ours!



**Pont yr Aran—
The bridge over
the Aran at
Dolgellau.**

Underneath the Arches

An ancient granite bridge spanning the River Aran on the outskirts of Dolgellau in our Aberystwyth District posed some unusual problems for our District staff recently.

As part of a scheme to inter-connect the town's low-voltage system and to improve the reliability of supply, they had to lay a double 90-metre run of 11,000-volt cable between two sub-stations.

Due to insufficient depth of roadway over the bridge, it was necessary to pass the cables underneath, boring through solid granite masonry and suspending them in separate steel pipes.

Due to the condition of the bridge, we were asked by Gwynedd County Council not to use jack-hammers. This made it necessary to use a heavy-duty elastic drill

to bore through the two-foot thick archways and a three-foot thick central buttress. The holes were then chipped out until they were big enough to accommodate the pipes.

Man in charge on the spot—under the direction of production engineer "T.R." Jones—was a cable ganger, John Connor, described by Mr. Jones as "a man who likes a challenge". John's liking for a challenge was a big advantage in solving a tricky problem, and the whole cable-laying job was finished in a fortnight.

This was also a case of inter-District co-operation, as Gwynedd District production engineer Ariel Thomas sent some of his jointers along to help out with six HV joints, which were needed when breaking into the two HV ring-systems in the vicinity.



Left, cable ganger John Connor points to the cable-carrying pipes under the bridge. Below are the gang who carried out the work, from left to right: Will Jones and Glyn Jones (labourers), John Micah (crane driver), Goronwy Lloyd, Ron Pugh (labourers) and John Connor. Labourer Peter Humphreys missed our photo-call.





Mr. Shoesmith, centre right, has a farewell handshake for Mr. Hargreaves.

RETIREMENTS

Mr. H. W. HARGREAVES

Having worked on a variety of jobs, from putting on plug-tops to rewiring factories, electrician Mr. Hugh William Hargreaves recently retired from his post in our North Mersey District.

During his 25 years with the Board, he has gained great respect from the many apprentice electricians who served with him to learn their trade, including his son Derek, who now works at the same depot.

Many stories are told of Mr. Hargreaves' time-saving ideas and the ingenious methods he brought in to his work.

In retirement he hopes to do a lot of travelling. His first trip will be to Holland, and then he intends to cruise down the Rhine, before taking a trip to see his Canadian cousin. Eventually—"if the money holds out"—he would like to visit Japan.

To help him to see more places of interest on these world-wide journeys, his colleagues at Bridle Road subscribed to present him with a pair of binoculars—with zoom control—and a radio.

Farewell gifts were presented by Mr. George Shoesmith (*District Administrative Officer*) who, with many others, paid tribute to Mr. Hargreaves' zest for work and to his helpfulness to all apprentices.

Mr. C. F. PINCHES

Friends and colleagues gathered at Head Office to say farewell to Mr. Charles F. Pinches, who retired from MANWEB after 28 years' service.

He joined MANWEB in 1951, having served in the RASC during the war and with several local firms before coming to the Board. His service with the electricity industry was interrupted for approximately one year, before he returned to the fold.

During his MANWEB service, he has worked for the Engineering Department in the control room, for the Commercial Department as a clerical assistant, and for the Financial Department, where he maintained the records for cable drums.

Charlie and his wife have two married daughters with grandchildren. He enjoys tinkering with motor cars and is a keen coarse fisherman—so much of his retirement will be spent using the new tool-kit he received as a parting gift from his colleagues, or sitting patiently on river banks waiting for a bite.

Mr. F. HUGHSON

Forty-three years' service to the electricity supply industry—and not a single day off due to sickness during that time! That's the incredible record of Mr. Frank Hughson (*principal assistant—Financial and Management Accounts*) at Head Office, who retired recently.

Frank began his working life back in 1936 with

Colleagues gather round as Mr. Peter Falcon (*Assistant Chief Accountant*), centre left, bids farewell to Mr. Pinches.





Mr. Reg Huyton (Assistant Chief Accountant), pictured centre, shakes hands with Mr. Hughson, left. Mrs. Hughson is on the right of Mr. Huyton, holding a bouquet.

the Crosville Bus Company, moving to Chester Corporation Electricity Dept. two years later.

From 1941 to 1946, he served with the RAF on radar work, returning to the Corporation on demob and joining MANWEB on nationalisation.

From then until 1970, he was engaged in financial work at Newgate Street and New Crane Street, Chester, moving to Head Office on re-organisation. In recent years he has specialised in producing financial information on engineering activities.

Frank enjoys motoring, gardening and DIY, and has been a keen supporter of Chester F.C.

On behalf of his many friends, he was presented with a dinner-service by Mr. Reg Huyton (*Assistant Chief Accountant*), while there was a bouquet for Mrs. Hughson. A good turn-out of long-standing colleagues assembled at Head Office to hear Reg wish them both a long and happy retirement.

Mr. J. H. PAYNE

A large number of engineering colleagues gathered at our Mold depot a short time ago to pay their

tributes and wish good health and happiness to Mr. James Howard Payne (*foreman*) on the occasion of his retirement. He joined the Board in 1949 at Llandudno Junction and, for a time, was with the construction gang working on the rural development programme in North Wales.

In making the presentation of a parting gift, Mr. Les Griffiths (*District Engineer*) spoke of Mr. Payne's early days when he had been a boxer of some repute, having fought some of the best bruisers in the country.

He also mentioned that Mr. Payne had done more fighting, of a different kind, during the last war, when, with the 4th Indian Division, he served in El Alamein, Italy and Greece.

Mr. Griffiths inferred that Jim was still fighting when he said how pleased he was to see him looking so well after his recent serious illness.

"I have always found Jim to be a very honest, reliable and conscientious person," he concluded.

In reply, Mr. Payne remarked on how pleased he was to see so many friends. "I have really enjoyed working with you all and I have some special memories of colleagues of bygone days too," he said.

Popular foreman, Mr. Payne, centre right, says his farewells to Mr. Griffiths and his many friends in Clwyd District.





We couldn't do without them

Our cameraman arrived bright and early one morning, to get this photograph of busy activity, as staff in our mailing section at Head Office began opening and sorting the huge mountain of letters. This is a daily routine and, with this typical deskful, our picture shows, *from left to right*: Vince Hollender and Jane Lewis (*Cash Office*), Karen Hunt, Jackie Ryan (*hidden*), Pam Kelly and Carol Parry (*hidden*), Ray Morgan (*Mailroom supervisor*), Eddie Lunt (*principal assistant—General Administration*), Jenny Evans (*hidden*), Sue Hansom, Debbie Jones, Janet Evans (*Cash Office*) and Julie Pudge (*Cash Office*).

Every week, they deal with over 40,000 incoming

letters and despatch about 130,000 items. These include electricity accounts, which have to be sorted out into postal towns before being "bagged" in readiness for daily collection by GPO van.

The gross annual cost of postage through the mailroom comes to a staggering £1-million!

In addition to routing and collecting the mail throughout the Head Office complex, correspondence is despatched to our various District offices and depots each day. Most of this is carried on our own courier service.

It is estimated that about two tons of mail—internal and GPO—goes through the section every week.