

A Message from the Chairman



IN TIMES of war our country has been in difficulty many times but we have survived as a nation because when danger has threatened we have had the good sense to set aside internal differences, close our ranks and present a united front to the aggressor.

The dangers which now face us all cry out for a resurgence of these qualities because potentially these dangers, although more subtle in origin, represent a threat as serious as that from any aggressor. The pressures from within as well as outside our society do not only bring the risk of economic chaos but in addition threaten the very roots of our way of life and the survival of democracy as we know it. We must, as a people, find the right answer. The penalty of failure is unthinkable.

We can perhaps best help now by each making a positive contribution to the good things which integrate society and do not divide it. We should as a people place our consciences on trial more frequently and consider carefully the possible consequences of our individual and collective actions. Above all, the time may now be overdue for those who believe in our way of life to nail their colours to the mast.

The sombre background against which I write this message does not diminish in any way my sincere wish that Christmas will be a good one for all of you. I hope, however, that you might find a little time to think on these things because the happiness and wellbeing of our families in all the Christmases to follow are linked inseparably with them.

Deins Loves.



THE STAFF MAGAZINE OF THE MERSEYSIDE AND NORTH WALES ELECTRICITY BOARD

CONTACT

Vol. 25 No. 12

December 1973

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Greetings from the

-Editorial Staff -Keith Baldwin John F. Perry Sam Doughty

EDITORIAL

"Trouble at T'Mill"

.... was how the people of the textile towns used to describe it. Today, under the more fashionable label of 'industrial action,' it is rife in many quarters, and the need to make the best possible use of facilities designed to promote an orderly pattern of working life is more urgent than ever.

When the irresistible force meets the immovable object over so clearly-understood an issue as money then obviously there is likely to be a bang, but there are all too many instances, in many industries, of trouble brewing at the mill over minor grievances and trivial misunderstandings. The fact that these can quickly grow out of all proportion to their real importance can be put down to one glaring weakness—failure of communication.

Within our own industry the machinery of joint consultation at all levels rules out any possibility of molehills growing into mountains. Much time and attention is given, through the joint consultation machinery, to flattening the molehills as they appear, and whether your representatives are discussing toe-tector boots, puddles in the car park, or simply the supply of paper in the loo, they are doing a most valuable job in disposing of those many minor irritations which breed resentment and loss of morale.

During recent weeks most of our LACs have been holding their annual social gatherings, and these have been noteworthy this year for the size of the attendances. Not many people travel anything up to forty miles on a cold wet night just for a free hot-pot, so the obvious reward must be the chance to spend a few pleasant hours in the company of their fellow-workers—an attraction also to the large number of pensioners who are always made so welcome.

The good fellowship generated on these occasions—and the opportunities to fire unrehearsed questions at the 'top table'—also help to nip potential molehills in the bud.



Round
the
tables
with
some
of the

happy



groups at the Conference









District Officers and guests from Head Office with N



Iresses the Conference.

Gwynedd District Conference

WELL over a hundred people attended this year's Annual Conference for employees in the Gwynedd District held at the Royal Hotel in Caernarfon a few weeks ago.

Mr. K. Helliwell (Group Manager) as Chairman of the No. 8 Local Advisory Committee, opened the meeting by saying how pleased he was at the interest shown by members of the District staff in attendance. He had a special word of welcome for the pensioners present and to the guests from Head Office who were Messrs. A. P. Whyte (Chief Accountant), T. Dean (Appliance Marketing Manager), A. Kidd (Assistant Secretary—Personnel), H. W. Hegarty (Assistant Chief Accountant—Finance) and J. Pilkington (Executive Officer—Welfare).



Guest Speaker Mr. Roberts

Following the welcome, Mr. L. C. Jones, as Secretary of the L.A.C. in presenting the Report of the Committee's work during the year laid special emphasis on safety matters. Then Mr. Helliwell spoke for a short time to give a progress report on the Board's activities and went some way to put into plain language some of the facts

and figures presented in the last Annual Report.

Guest speaker for the evening was Mr. E. M. R. Roberts, an Executive Officer with the CEGB at Llandudno. His interesting talk, backed up with an excellent film—both enthusiastically received—gave the assembly an up-to-date picture of the Dinorwic project being carried out by the CEGB.

The meeting ended with a lively "Open Forum" session with a variety of questions on a number of subjects. The questions were mostly serious but one or two had a humourous slant like the one sugges-

ting that as we already have a "Girl from MAN-WEB" then why not have a beefy foreman type or a rugged linesman as "The Man from MANWEB"?



An 'Open Forum' question prompted an artist in the District to send us his impression of 'The Man from MANWEB—1974.' He asks us to state that any resemblance—however slight—to persons living, is purely intentional—sorry—accidental.

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MANWEB

Communications

Service

Miss Linda Cunningham, pictured below, who helps run the North Mersey end of the teleprinter link.



NTER LINK UP TELEPRINTER LINK UP
NTER LINK UP TELEPRINTER LINK UP
NTER LINK UP TELEPRINTER LINK UP
LINK UP
NTER LINK UP TELEPRINTER LINK UP

ve years ago, when the MANWEB telephone system was signed by our technical engineers to serve the re-organised ure, it was realised that we could have a teleprinter system Itaneous use of the same lines as the telephone system.

A teleprinter signal only requires a small part of a signalling path, and in fact 12 teleprinters can be put in place of one phone call. It was found possible to provide two teleprinter circuits and one speech

circuit to each District, over a single telephone line.

The teleprinter system has recently been completed, and Head Office, all District offices, and Queensferry stores are now connected to it. It is possible, via the Teleprinter Section at Head Office, to send a telex message to any organisation in the world, equipped with a teleprinter.

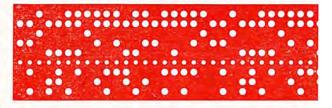
It costs no more to send a telex than it does to prepare a memo in the typing pool, and a copy is provided both for the sender and the addressee.

Teleprinter services can be used to advantage:

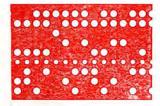
- (1) When the message is meant for more than one person, especially at different Board locations.
- (2) When telephone lines are engaged, or the person sought is not available.
- (3) Where a typescript copy of the message passed is required.
- (4) If the message is urgent.
- (5) Where regular standard reports or schedules are being transmitted, and are regularly up-dated.

At present Head Office is connected to Liverpool, North Mersey and North Wirral Districts by Board-owned cables, and to the remaining Districts and Queensferry stores by circuits rented from the GPO. The telegraph switchboard at Head Office which links them all was also entirely designed by MANWEB engineers.

The correct use of the teleprinter system can, in many cases, provide communication just as quickly as a phone call, and can do much to alleviate the overloading of the internal telephone networks which sometimes occurs.







If you look clos right, you will see Mother and Child, to the of characters from a tele-

printer keyboard. This is just one of the many festive creations of teleprinter operators which has become traditional at Christmas time.

This particular typographic art is the work of the girls at the Head Office Telex centre. They and the rest of their colleagues in the Sealand Road Telecommunications section extend their best wishes to all their colleagues at the other end of the wire, and include in their hopes for a happy Christmas and a peaceful new year all their many 'customers' throughout the Board.

Pictured below are the Head Office teleprinter operators, Mrs. Pat Hunt, in the foreground, and Miss Irene 'Mattie' Matthewson, pounding the keys.





... and still on communications -



"No luv, it isn't an automatic answering device—it is a real person talking."



Left, Mr.
Savage with
Mr. Trimble.
Right,
Messrs. G.
Zeiher, F.
Brown and
N. Walsh.





No. 6 L.A.C. Employees Meeting

THE THEATRE TODAY

The ballroom at the Alvaston Hall, Nantwich, was the setting for the annual meeting of employees in Mid-Cheshire District.

After an excellent meal, the chairman for the evening, Group Manager Mr. J. W. Trimble, welcomed delegates and guests and had a special greeting for the 23 retired employees present.

Speaking of the Board's progress since the last meeting, Mr. Trimble showed his disappointment and frustration at the third consecutive year in which MANWEB had shown a deficit. Rising fuel costs were the major cause. The Board had not been allowed to recoup it's losses by increasing tariffs sufficiently, owing to the Government's prices policy.

Illustrating his point about fuel costs, he said that a man had recently won $\mathfrak{L}_{\frac{1}{2}}$ million on the football pools. This vast amount of money would only pay for enough fuel to produce seven hours supply of electricity from the power stations.

There had been bright spots in the year, sales of electricity had increased overall and more important industrial consumption was up. Appliance sales and contracting work had also increased and Mr. Trimble thanked the staff for their efforts. The sorry state of the industry's finances was no reflection on the staff.

Mr. H. Allman, L.A.C. Secretary, outlined the years work of the Committee. Mr. Trimble then introduced the guest speaker, Mr. C. Savage, the director of Crewe Theatre.

This was only the second occasion this year on which Mr. Savage said he had worn a tie—he preferred casual gear. The first occasion was exactly a month ago, also at Alvaston Hall, which was completely empty, on checking his diary he discovered he was a month early!

A much travelled man of the theatre, Mr. Savage explained there were four "leagues" of theatrical establishment. The commercial theatre was in the first division. This was mainly centred around the West End and was rather expensive to attend.

Division 2 consisted of the repertory theatres, such as Crewe, which is 'your theatre, paid for and subsidised out of taxes' he told his audience.

Delegates prepare to dispose of the first item on the agenda-food.







Leach with Mr. D. Hodgetts.

Right, Mr. H. Allman talks with Mr. N.

Kenyon.

Left, Mr. K. S.



Experimental or fringe theatre was division 3. This was carried out in a variety of places and required quite a bit of understanding.

The fourth division was the theatre workshop, concentrating on children and education, and was normally a part of Rep. In Crewe they had such a group in which actors performed in schools and children came to the theatre to act.

Theatres abroad

In his travels, Mr. Savage had observed theatres in other lands. The French had culture houses, large complexes containing two theatres, art gallery, library, etc.

In eastern Europe he visited a town about the size of Crewe which had three theatres, one for ballet, one for opera and one for actors. The groups of artists were larger than in Britain. The state maintained a company of 30 to 40 for each.

In the United States the theatre was totally commercial, and playwrights had difficulty in staging productions.

British theatre, he considered the best in the world for actors, although it is struggling through lack of funds. There is also a lack to good writers and there are very few modern plays of quality making social comment, there is too much nostalgia.

Acting was an overpopulated profession. We had many good actors in this country who had to leave

the profession through lack of work. Actors or average earned only £25 per week and there were 70/75% out of work at any given time.

At Crewe, Mr. Savage was gradually changing the image of the theatre and hoping for expansion. He advocated the use of the buildings for more activities, the theatre should be the centre of a complex for all forms of live entertainment.

After thanking Mr. Savage, Mr. Trimble invited questions from the floor. These included queries about ventilation and noise levels at Macon Way and the reading of industrial meters plus an appeal for assistance in setting up a retired employees club.

The formal business of the evening being complete, tables were cleared from the dance floor and the loudspeakers boomed out music compered by Mr. Norman Kenyon from Head Office presenting his "Sealand Sound!"

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Delegates take their seats at the start of the very well attended Mid-Cheshire meeting.



TRADE FAIR

The biggest yet

THE Electric Living Trade Fair continues to grow both in size and popularity. The next Fair will be held at Harrogate from February 5th to 7th, 1974 and will be the biggest yet. More than 200 exhibitors will occupy 181 stands and 57,200 square foot of stand space—which is 34 more exhibition stands and 9,000 square foot more stand space than last time. All the space has been let and there is a short waiting list.

The Fair is organised by The Electricity Council and is attended by Electricity Board commercial and marketing staffs and the electrical wholesale and retail trade as well as buyers from many overseas countries particularly from EEC. The general public are not admitted. Admission is by ticket or trade card only. The Fair is arranged at the same period as the electricity supply industry marketing conference.

The Electric Living Trade Fair gives manufacturers of electrical appliances and associated products and services the opportunity to meet the men and women who buy and sell their products and to show them their latest equip-



AWARDS FOR SERVICE

Three men from MANWEB, each holding office for more than 21 years with the Liverpool Electric Power and Lighting Sports and Welfare Club, had their service recognised in a tangible way recently when a dinner was held in their honour and gifts from Club members were presented to them.

Our picture, above, shows Mr. Denis Dodds (Board Chairman), right, congratulating the three Club officials, from left to right: Messrs. Reg Adams (Secretary), Ken Woodward (Treasurer) and

Eric Taylor (Chairman).

ment. A feature is made of appliances introduced since the previous Fair. The 1974 Fair will almost certainly have a record number of all kinds of electrical appliances ranging from air purifiers to yoghurt makers. The emphasis however will be on the larger appliances-cookers, refrigerators, freezers, washing and dishwashers machines -which have all enjoyed increased sales since the Fair earlier this year.

BIRTH

Congratulations to Mrs. Christine Byrne, on the birth of a 7lb 5oz baby boy, Andrew John, on December 12th. Christine was a clerk in the Superannuation Section and husband Pat is an Administrative Assistant in our Printing Section at Head Office.

* Cra



- The electronic computer saves a man a pot of guesswork—but so does a bikini.
- After a lifetime of service, a chap retired to Blaenau Ffestiniog. He did this because he thought that the transition to death would be imperceptible.
- One man's folly is another man's wife.
- ☆ A woman is never too old to yearn.
- A cold is both positive and negative. Sometimes -- the eyes have it sometimes the noes.
- A senior officer recovering from illness received the following telegram—"By a majority of "5 to 4 the Board wish you a speedy recovery."



"Electric Living" Exhibitions – at Llandudno

After officially opening the show, Councillor Emyr Hughes, Chairman of Llandudno Urban District Council is joined by his wife on a tour round the exhibits, escorted by Pat Reed, our "Girl from MANWEB" and Mr. Brian Baxter, right, (energy sales engineer, Clwyd District).



Welshpool

The Mayor of Welshpool, Councillor Mrs. M. A. Davies, was joined by her Mayoress, Mrs. P. Davies, when she opened our exhibition in the town. Another welcome guest was the Member of Parliament for Montgomery, Mr. Emlyn Hooson, Q.C. Our picture shows, from left to right: Mr. Hooson, Pat Reed, Councillor Mrs. Davies, Mrs. P. Davies and Mr. R. A. Williams (District Commercial Engineer, Oswestry).



Southport's leading citizens, The Mayor and Mayoress, Alderman and Mrs. Robert Molyneux, pose for a picture after they had opened the Ainsdale exhibition. From left to right we see, Mr. D. E. Noad (District Commercial Engineer), Mr. A. W. Hawley (District Engineer), Mrs. Molyneux, Alderman Molyneux, Pat Reed and Mr. D. St. C. Barrie (energy sales engineer, North Mersey District).





and Aberystwyth

From way down in the deep south of our area comes this happy group taken at the Aberystwyth exhibition. The Mayor, Councillor Bryn Davies, who performed the opening ceremony, is flanked, on the left, by his wife, the Mayoress, and on the right, by Mrs. Pat Reed, our "Girl from MANWEB."



Five-a-side soccer competition



The winners, Secretarial Admin. Left to right, standing: Messrs. P. Byrne, D. Passmore and D. Swire. Kneeling: Messrs. D. Roxburgh and R. Morgan (capt.).

Chester Sports and Social Club secretary, Mr. Gren Roberts, split the 16 teams entered for their annual 5-a-side soccer tournament, held at the Christleton Leisure Centre, into two leagues.

Each team played each other in their respective leagues and the top four from each went through for the quarter finals of a knockout competition.

The final saw Crane Street Contracting, with captain Ralph Buckley almost filling his goalmouth, narrowly beaten by the odd goal in three.

The winners this year were Secretarial Admin., whose captain Ray Morgan received the champions cup from club chairman Mr. Harry Foreman.



Finalists, Crane Street Contracting. Left to right, standing: Messrs. G. Croft, R. Buckley (capt.) and D. Spenser. Kneeling: Messrs. R. G. Williams and I. Craven.

Brains & Brawn at Head Office



General knowledge contest

There were 17 teams entered for the Chester Sports and Social Club Inter-departmental quiz, held recently at Head Office.

Run on a knockout basis, this battle of wits was finally whittled down to the two finalists, Computer 'A' and the 'Ground Hogs.'

With quizmaster Mr. T. 'Bamber' Dutton firing the questions, it was the Ground Hogs who finally triumphed and were presented with the splendid trough—sorry—trophy.

The Ground Hogs, left, standing: Messrs. R. F. Kenyon and W. Shaw. Seated: Mr. J. Roberts and Mrs. D. Davis.

Right, Computer 'A,' standing: Messrs. C. Dempsey and D. Garnett. Seated: Mrs. C. Hunt and Mr. S. Clark.



Contact PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

Colour v Black and White

Before the arrival of the colour transparency era—which made first-class pictures possible for every amateur photographer owning even a 35mm camera of the most moderate performance—the world of black-and-white photography was split into two more or less clear-cut groups.

On the one hand we had the great majority, who happily pointed their box brownies at the subject of their choice, trusted to luck or to the most rough-and-ready yardsticks of timing and exposure, and hopefully offered their rolls of film to the local chemist to be developed and printed.

The second group were the fanatics of the photographic world—those who rigged up their own darkrooms in their attics, spent all their spare cash on equipment and talked knowledgeably among themselves of printing papers, film speeds and grain.

There are those who believe that the very best of colour photographs cannot compare in the fields of artistry and interpretation with the best of black-and-white photography, and always in the past our Contact photographic competition has attracted a fine selection of high-class work in the black-and-white field.

For reasons which we do not fully understand, things were different this year. Perhaps fewer of the younger generation of enthusiastic amateur photographers are attracted to the black-and-white field, but for the first time ever our judges found themselves unable to award a prize in one section—the *Black and White (General)*, while even in the *Portrait Section* (usually the strong contender), high-quality entries were thin on the ground. A sign of the times, we suppose!

Colour transparencies, however, were of an exceptionally high standard this year, and there were many unplaced entries which really deserved to win prizes—and which would have done so in lesser company. Such are the drawbacks of competitions!

The competition is open to all MANWEB employees, pensioners and their families and one of our colleagues had entries submitted by his son and daughter. The son, who is an officer cadet in the Merchant Navy, captured the prize in the Colour Print Section.

Once more we thank all our friends for their efforts, and for the trouble they have taken in sending us the best of their work. They certainly don't do it for the money—after all, our prizes are only nominal—but it is nice to know that the judges share the enthusiast's view that a particular picture is really something exceptional.

PRIZEWINNERS

COLOUR TRANSPARENCIES:

1st Prize-"Wasdale Head" submitted by

Mr. T. N. Oulton, 3rd assistant engineer, Head Office.

2nd Prize-"Proud Bird" submitted by

Mr. T. H. Owen, Test Engineer, Head Office Test Laboratory, Queensferry.

3rd Prize-"Early one morning" submitted by

Mr. T. N. Oulton, 3rd assistant engineer, Head Office.

COLOUR PRINTS:

Best picture-"Memories" submitted by

Mr. Shaun Barrie, son of Mr. D. St. C. Barrie, Energy Sales Engineer, North Mersey Dist.

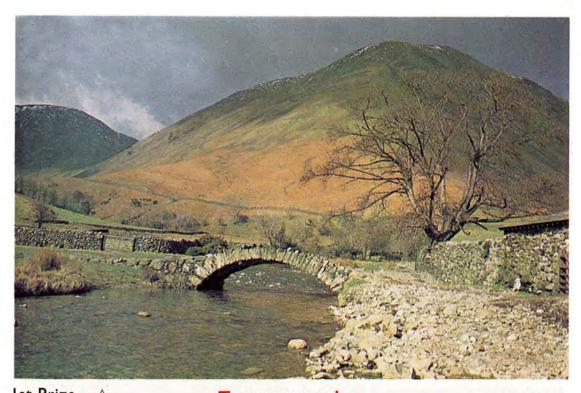
BLACK AND WHITE-PORTRAIT SECTION:

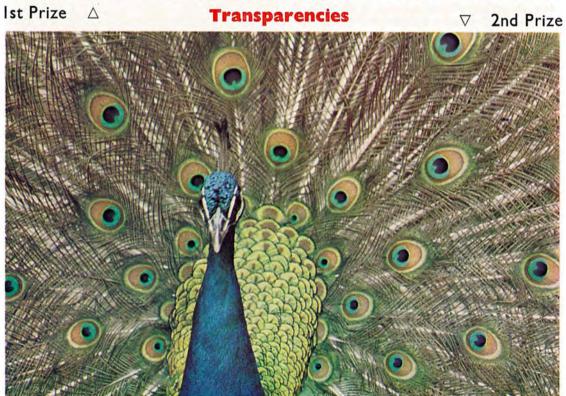
1st Prize-" Rupert" submitted by

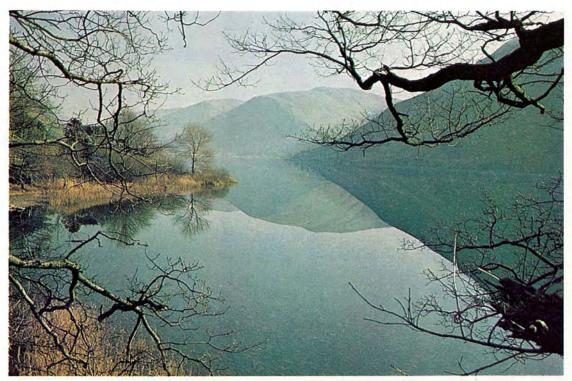
Mr. W. G. D. Hood, Senior Assistant Engineer, Head Office.

BEST HUMOUROUS PICTURE—COLOUR OR BLACK AND WHITE:

Submitted by Mr. G. A. S. Lewer, Display Leader, Head Office.







3rd Prize △

▽ Best Colour Print





Contact PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

BLACK and WHITE

Portrait Section

"Rupert"
by W. G. D. HOOD

General Section

NO PRIZE AWARDED



Best Humourous Picture

"But I can't
afford a
pigeon loft!"
by
G. A. S. LEWER

COAL -

in the long term

AS PART of their continuing planning discussions, CEGB and NCB have recently exchanged up-to-date information relative to the long term investment planning of their industries based on the substantial measure of common interest between them.

On the one hand, a major part of CEGB generating capacity is coal-fired (some 70 per cent at present); on the other, power stations represent by far the largest market for NCB coal (at present 54 per cent including Scotland). Further, both industries have long lead-times for their major investments which make joint consultation logical and desirable, and this also applies to British Railways who carry the bulk of the coal.

In the current year the CEGB are consuming coal purchased from the NCB at an annual rate of 65—67 million tons (this is some 7—9 million tons more than it would otherwise have been, due to assistance under the terms of the Coal Industry Act, 1973).

The NCB expectation is that the availability of coal for CEGB by the early 1980's will be within a range of 65—75 million tons, of which 50—60 million tons will come from the central coalfields. This is on the assumption that a substantial invest-

ment programme is undertaken to increase the capacity of existing efficient pits.

The CEGB's estimates of coal consumption are based on the electricity supply industry's current forecast of electricity growth projected forward at 5 per cent per annum. Depending upon assumptions about gas supplies to power stations and about conversions from coal to oil, but without assuming any new investment in coal-fired power stations, then the Generating Board's estimate of unsubsidised coal consumption will grow to within the same range, i.e. 65—75 million tons by the beginning of the 1980's. This is on the assumption that oil/coal price relationships continue as at present; however if oil lost its competitive position in relation to coal the existing power stations would offer a substantially expanded market for coal.

In the longer term, current proposals for investment in new sinkings in Yorkshire, the Midlands and elsewhere, where substantial seams can be worked economically, will off-set the loss of capacity due to exhaustion or other reasons, and will be taken into account by the CEGB in their forward plans for the installation of new generating capacity.

It is emphasised that the future coal consumption by power stations and the prospects for any additional coal burning capacity must depend on the continuing drive for home production of coal at competitive prices. The question of security of primary energy supplies will also need to be taken into account.

PETROL — then and now

The following statistics, published by the British Road Federation, may give you food for thought . . .

Motor fuel tax-per gallon

			-	
1909			14.0	3d
1928	4.4	* *	4.4	4d
1938				9d
1950				1s 6d
1961	,.			2s 9d
1968				3s 7d
1971				22½p

It seems that our dependence on petrol is recognised not only by the Sheiks of Araby!

"If anyone else asks me if we are digging for oil, I'll do 'im!"

Our tame cartoonist Illingworth of North Mersey District gives his impressions of the petrol shortage hitting one of our jointing teams.



Lighting in Greenhouses

THE second in the Electricity Council's series of Grow-electric handbooks, "Lighting in Greenhouses," explains the effects of

light on plant growth and the available sources of artificial light for horticulture. Supplementary lighting and photoperiodic lighting are discussed and recommendations for light treatment of various crops are given in detail.

Growers and horticulturalists have long realised that there is a deficiency of natural light between October and March; but little effort was put into making it up with artificial light until a few supplementary lighting systems were introduced in the mid 1960's. The introduction of commercial growing rooms sparked off a nationwide interest in artificial lighting because it became obvious that the extra boost to plant growth considerably shortened the propagation period for tomatoes, lettuce and bedding plants. This resulted in significant economies in production costs accompanied by higher yields in some cases.

FELL WALKING

Under the capable leadership of Mr. Henry Williams (3rd assistant Systems engineer), the Fell Walking Section of the Clwyd District Sports and Social Club have recently come to the end of a very successful season.

Walks were organised to Llyn Eigiau, Foel Fras, Pennant Valley, and Moel Siabod. The highlight of the season was a midnight walk to the summit of Snowdon concluding with the sight of a beautiful sunrise.

This was the 'Walkers' first season and new members from any other District and Head Office will be most welcome. If you are interested, please contact Mr. Williams at Clwyd District Office. There have been conflicting reports on the degree of success achieved by research workers and experimental stations with various types of artificial lighting and during the development period there has been very little information to help growers make planning decisions.

Now, with the publication of the "Lighting in Greenhouses" handbook, useful information is provided which will undoubtedly help the grower decide on which lamp and lighting system suits his individual needs.

When used in conjunction with its companion handbook, "Growing Rooms," it provides the most comprehensive source of information on light in horticulture to date. Extensive appendices give instructions on how to use the various available sources of light to design a lamp lay-out. Costing the installation is also explained in detail. "Lighting in Greenhouses" is an invaluable book for growers, advisers, students, training officers and technical representatives.

Individual copies are available free from the Electricity Council, Agricultural Section, 30 Millbank, London SW1P 4RD.

Feeling ill? Have you a tendency for hypochondria? Would you make a good patient?

Seriously fully-fit people, male and female, are required to act as casualties and patients for the Head Office First Aid team. Please contact Mr. John Shallcross, Tel. 2451.



When you're as good as Fred, you're handicapped out of the game



A Short Story

by Mr. T. E. MATTHEWS

3rd Assistant Engineer, North Mersey

THE PHANTOM of Bridle Road has finally disappeared; the Phantom that was only heard but never seen. Stranger still, it was heard only by the female staff in—dare I mention it?—the Ladies' Powder Room.

"It" took the form of a whistle, heard with increasing frequency by members of the staff who used the room marked so clearly with a distinctive female figure. It started about eight weeks ago. Terrified typists and petrified clerks rushed screaming from their toiletries convinced that some male chauvinistic pig had secreted himself in that sanctum sanctorum with the sole purpose of espying where male eyes should never espy. The whistle was described variously as a "Wolf Whistle"; the opening bars of "No No Nanette," the "Wedding March," and by one typist, whose musical knowledge was very superior, as "Bach's Fugue in B Minor."

After about four days of mounting hysteria, an investigation was carried out by Bill the Maintenance Engineer, accompanied by Jack the Plumber. They heard nothing. It was finally concluded that air locks in the piping were most probably the cause. A thorough overhaul of the pipework took the best part of the week, and revealed no faults. In the meantime the whistling got worse and it became the habit of the girls to travel in convoy to and from the haunted chamber. Even so the white drawn faces of the outcoming convoy gave ample

evidence that it was only their true British grit and the fact that they had to go, which enabled them to brave the terrors of the cheep.

Matters finally came to a head when the Board was faced with a mass of resignations. It was then decided that something must be done. What exactly nobody knew. Someone suggested exorcism and in desperation a Service of Exorcism was held; but only males were present and except for the quiet drip of a tap there was no sound to disturb the ceremony. When the ceremony was finished two volunteer typists went in, but emerged screaming in a few minutes, gabbling about the cacophony of whistles that greeted their entry.

It was a few days after this when I was enjoying my cuppa in the canteen, that I spoke to Beryl, Energy Sales. Inevitably the conversation got around to the Phantom Whistler or Dirty Dan, as the girls now referred to it. It amused me that each girl referred to the spirit as a "him" and when I jocularly referred to this, the retort was "Well of course it's a 'Him,' no girl would whistle or hum that rude tune,"—and here she hummed a few bars of "Colonel Bogey." I gazed at her for a moment—and then it clicked! Suddenly, I knew beyond any reasonable doubt who was responsible and I also knew how to lay the ghost, provided I could get the co-operation of the people concerned.

Marshalling my thoughts in what I hoped was a

coherent order I knocked on the door marked "Group Manager." A weary voice bade me to enter. Squaring my shoulders and straightening my back I marched inside. "Sir, I believe I have found the cause, and with your help, the cure for the "Phantom Whistler." He was very polite but I could see by his eyes that he was wondering what new hairbrained idea he had to listen to. "If you will bear with me, Sir, I'd like to relate a story which I believe has a direct bearing on this phenomenon." He hesitated slightly then waved me to a seat, settled back in his chair and with a resigned look in his eyes, quietly told me to carry on.

I gave him a brief resumé of the case. He asked for more details. I elaborated my theme. He probed deep. Finally after a flurry of telephone calls and about an hour later we were on our way from the office and the mystery was half way to being solved.

But first let me give you the whole story as I know it. Judge, as the Group Manager had to, whether there was enough credence in my testimony to warrant further action.

It all began some fifty years ago in the little Welsh village of "Bryn Bychain." During a wild stormy night in late November Mrs. Eluned Parry was giving birth to a son—her fifth. It was a long and difficult confinement and the screaming of the wind was matched at times by the screams of painwracked Eluned. Finally little William was born. He had to be slapped three times before he showed any signs of life and the first sounds he uttered were not the cry of a new-born infant, but a wild whistle that sent shivers down the spine of Mrs. Myfanwy, the Midwife.

"Eerie it was" she said, "That whistle gave me such a shock I nearly dropped 'im. I says to Eluned 'Whistling for 'is supper, 'e is. 'E's bin such a long time coming 'e's missed his dinner and tea'." Word of these events spread like wildfire through the village and it was therefore inevitable that literally from his first few moments of life the boy was known as "Whistling Willie."

At the age of five he was taken with his family to a brass Band concert at Bryn Mawr Miners' Institute, Bryn Mawr being the local market town. On his way home he surprised—nay amazed—everyone by suddenly whistling—to perfection—the piece "Poets and Peasants" which had been one of the star items in the concert. His mother was impressed. His father, who was himself something of a musician, having twice won the solo tenor competition at the National Eisteddfod, was ecstatic. "Duw Mawr Eluned" he cried "We've got a pluddy genius." "No need to use bad language Elfed" she said. "Bad language," he retorted, "I'm not using bad language. All I'm saying is that the lad's a pluddy genius."

From that day forth Elfed encouraged his son to develop his wonderful gift. Not that Willie needed any prodding. A natural mimic, he could soon imitate any sound that was a whistle. Birds, trains, kettles—you name it, he did it. Many's the time he imitated the full-time whistle of the referee when his



local soccer team was winning with just one goal margin and ten minutes to full time.

Elfed realised early that his son's gift was due to a unique shaping of the lips. When pursed, they extended like a funnel a good inch from his chin. He also realised that if anything occurred which spoilt that shape, the lad's gift would be gone. With his own smoothing days vivdly recalled, he decided that kissing, and especially the lover's kiss, was the one thing that Willie must avoid like the plague. So began a period of brain-washing which over the years transformed Willie into a mysoginist. As a teenager he could look at a woman, he could feel for a woman, he could yearn for a woman but at the back of his mind was his father's constant entreaty "Don't kiss them Willie, Diawch, for the sake of a few moments thrill it's not worth ruining your precious lips."

Willie was as warm blooded as the next man and this constant frustration embittered him towards the opposite sex. He grew up with the firm conviction that all females except his mother and two sisters were agents of the devil. To his way of thinking, the prettier the girl and thus the greater the temptation to explore those juicy and often inviting lips, the more of the devil she had in her.

Over the years his fame had spread far and wide, not only in his own locality but throughout the length and breadth of the country. From unpaid soloist at concerts he graduated into the realms of clubs and theatres. His repertoire was wide and included most of the major works of famous composers. That great Welsh composer Ieuan Anwelo wrote especially for him the well known "Serenade for a Whistle," which he performed at Cardiff Municipal Hall accompanied by the Royal Welsh Symphony Orchestra. His own favourite was "Colonel Bogey." Whenever he whistled for his own enjoyment, it was always "Colonel Bogey."

He joined the Royal Welch Fusiliers in 1939 and was drafted to France. While there he gained an M.M. and Croix-de-Guerre. Part of the Citation read ".... and with only two companions, captured a whole company of German soldiers by the expedient of imitating the whistle of falling bombs, thereby enabling the crouching Germans to be disarmed and marched towards our lines."

After Dunkirk his Battalion was posted to Singapore and he finished up the war as a prisoner of the Japs, working on the infamous Burmese Railway.



While constructing a bridge to cross the River Kwai he taught his section to whistle "Colonel Bogey." The film showed the whistling prisoners, but omitted, regrettably, to show the hours of patient tuition which had been spent by Willie teaching them.

He was repatriated at the end of the war and after spending three months in a Convalescent Hospital, was discharged and sent home. His father had died during the war and his mother passed away twelve months after his homecoming. With all his brothers and sisters married he became very lonely in his father's house. He lived with one of his married brothers but felt very much the odd man out. He also found that the public taste for music had changed.

There was no call at either club or theatre for his type of talent. It was now the era of the Pop Groups. After months of fruitless efforts trying for engagements, he decided, in desperation, to try his luck elsewhere. One of his sisters had married a lad from Bootle, and after the war she went there to live. He accepted her invitation to go and stay with her and her husband, and without more ado, packed his bags and moved in with them. Alas, the Pop mania was of a greater intensity around here than in his native Wales, and once again Willie found his type of work impossible to get. His brother-in-law Ned Taylor was a jointer with the Board, and it was through him that Willie got a start as general labourer, earning promotion over the years to a jointer's mate and then to a jointer.

During all these years Willie had been faithful

to his father's teachings. No passionate kissing for him. The very few times he had taken a girl out ended with a formal handshake. Once, greatly daring, he had pecked a rouged cheek, but fearing the worst, had not seen the girl afterwards.

Then one day he was introduced to Hyacinth. From Willie's bardic description, I got the impression that she was a Miss Universe, who had somehow forgotten to put in for the title. "A figure out of this world, boyo. Full busted, narrow hipped, long sleek legged. Small, upturned little nose, rosebud lips,

long flowing jet-black hair."

For the first time in his life he fell passionately in love. He started dating her and this time his father's advice lay hidden deep in his subconscious mind. It was there but buried so deeply that he could conveniently forget it. No more formal handshakes or pecks on the cheek. This was the real thing, and Willie entered into the relationship with a gusto which would have done credit to the immortal Rudolf Valentino. What matter if his lips did become flattened in the process. He cared not. His whistling days were over. Now, at last, he would begin to live. He still whistled, but only to denote an intense happiness that glowed in his face.

He courted her for twelve months and they were on the point of becoming engaged when she jilted him. Oh—the agony that stared out of his eyes. It made my heart bleed for him. For a whole month he went about like a man who has lost all hope.

I tried my best to shake him out of it. "No girl is worth it, Willie. You'll find someone else. Some good decent girl." He barely answered me. Gradually he became bitter about her, about females generally, about everyone under the sun. He started drinking heavily.



Being a Welshman, he had a deep love of his homeland. True, he had settled quite happily in Bootle. He liked the friendly people, had many friends at work, and was generally accepted as one of the lads. Outwardly he was content, but underneath this facade there was a yearning—a 'hiraeth' that was almost a sickness to be back amongst the mountains of Cwm Bach. The flat featureless landscape that is Bootle was anothema to his soul. More and more often, especially in his cups, he would talk to me about going back there to live when he retired. "Back to where I belong. That's where my heart is-that's where I belong." One day when I tentatively suggested that he might meet up with some nice girl and settle down in Bootle he snarled "Don't make me laugh, boyo, I wouldn't touch another one of those with a Bootle bargepole. Know what? When I'm dead and buried, I'll haunt their whole ruddy tribe."

I was away on holiday when it happened. It seems he had more than his usual to drink that Saturday night. He staggered from the Mersey Arms, tottred along the pavement, then stepped right under the wheels of a bus. He was cremated at Bootle Crematorium. I was shocked, and called around as soon as I could to sympathise with Eleri Taylor, his sister. "Poor Willie," she wept "He wanted so badly to return to Cwm Bach. Now all that remains is in that urn on the sideboard."

The Group Manager and I called to see Eleri. Tactfully he explained his mission. She wouldn't believe it. Why, her Willie wouldn't hurt a fly let alone frighten women. Together we persuaded her

to accompany us to Bridle Road. We let her go into the 'Loo' by herself. A few of the girls had volunteered to go with her, but she wouldn't have it. She was in there a good ten minutes, and we were on the point of sending someone to get her, when she walked out. Her eyes were misty, but there was a faint smile on her lips. "You're right of course It's him—no mistake." Turning to me she said "I think that's a good idea of yours Harry. I'm sure it's what he would have wished."

A few days later a small convoy of us—the Board's representatives, a few of his close friends and family, wended our way from Merseyside to the hills of Cwm Bychain. There we were met by the remainder of his family and their Minister. We proceeded to the highest peak of the local hills, known—ironically—as "Big William," and there, where the winds whistle from the four corners of the earth, we scattered his ashes. With the words "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust" I thought I heard, faintly, the opening bars of "Colonel Bogey," followed by a happy chuckle. I may have done, or maybe it was the winds of the skies paying their tribute to a gallant hero.

Except for the day-to-day chatter of girls, the Ladies' Powder Room at Bridle Road is now silent. It was something of an anticlimax when one of them turned to me a few days later and said "You know I wasn't really frightened. More thrilled really. I wish my boy friend could whistle like that!"

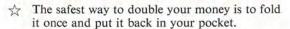




Wedding Bells

Another young lady from Bridle Road recently walked the bridal path. This time it was Miss Margaret Weekes, a draughtswoman, who went to the altar at St. Chad's Church in Kirkby with Mr. Terry Davies to become Mrs. Davies. Our picture, above, shows Margaret being congratulated in traditional style (!) by Mr. A. W. Hawley (District Engineer) after he had presented her with wedding gifts from her friends in North Mersey District. We join with them in wishing both Margaret and Terry every happiness for the future.

* Crackers



- Two nuns in a car ran out of petrol. They walked to a garage but the only container they could find to carry the petrol in was a 'potty.'

 They took this back to their car and as they poured it into the tank, a vicar was driving by. He pulled up, lowered his window and said, "Sisters, I don't like your religion, but I certainly admire your faith."
- Chap pouring out drink for his girl. "Say when." Seductively she purred, "Right after this drink."
- It's better to give than to lend—it costs about the same.

LEAVES NEW CRANE STREET

The voice of Mrs. Angela Stewart is no longer heard answering and directing calls on the switchboard at New Crane Street for she has now left the Board to prepare for a new arrival in her family. Her husband Peter is an electrician at the depot.

Still another connection with the Board is through Peter's Mum, Doreen, who works for Newgate Engraving, the firm who make the printing blocks for this magazine.



Not tonight Josephine

PRIZE CROSSWORD

Our crossword enthusiast readers have had many occasions in the past to be grateful to the inventive mind of our old friend Mr. F. G. Lott for the puzzles which he has compiled. This time Mr. Lott has really excelled himself, with the monster offering reproduced below.

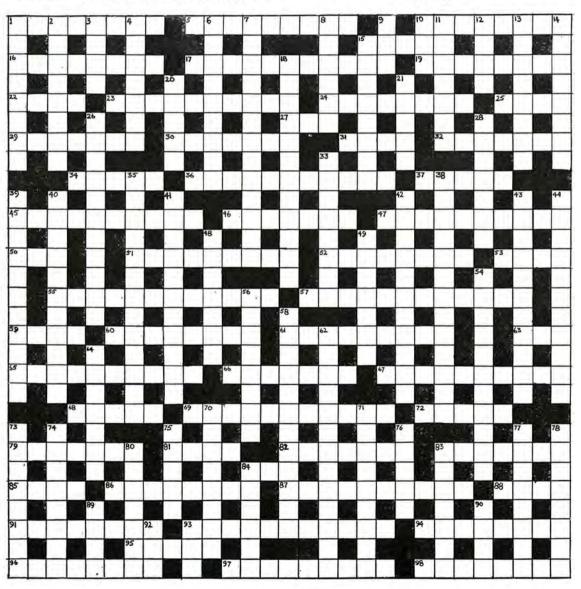
Don't be put off, however, by the enormous number of clues you have to answer. As crosswords go, the standard is not very difficult, and you should be able to fill in at least some of the blank spaces even when you are full of roast turkey and Christmas pud!

Prizes of £5 each will go to the first two all-correct entries drawn from the hat on January 10th—so put the ice-pack on your head, reach for your pen, and get to work!

Entries should be addressed to "The Editor, 'Contact,' MANWEB, Sealand Road, Chester, CH1 4LR," and the envelope should be endorsed "Crossword." Plain paper entries will be accepted.

Clues Across

- 1 In which one hoists the mizzenmast and arduously hauls in the flag (8)
- 5 This with 92 is when starchy maids come unstuck! (9, 3)
- 10 Enough Christmas pudding to get on with? (8)
- 15 This 74 has ancestors both sides of the Atlantic (5, 8)
- 16 Alternatively start an occidental opposite (8)
- 17 Where sailors' wives abound? (2, 5, 4)



- 19 Christmas ebb and flow (8)
- 22 The first Mrs. Copperfield (4)
- 23 His white 5 is famous! (4, 6)
- 24 An older gherkin (8)
- 25 Lear's old man of Thermopylae boiled an egg in one (4)
- 27 She is palindromic (3)
- 29 Unusually verbose, see? (7)
- 30 Young William that was (3, 4)
- 31 Milk comes frozen home in it when icicles hang by the wall (4)
- 32 It is sometimes paid! (7)
- 34 She married Val Dartie (5)
- 36 Gather seven haphazardly for a TV programme (3, 8)
- 37 The rascal I follow for Norwegian lobster meat (5)
- 45 A nice place to live on the level? (6, 4)
- 46 "I cleaned the swept the floor, and polished up the handle of the big front door (HMS Pinafore) (7)
- 47 Such a cheque would make a nice 38 (9, 4)
- 50 Those caves of Kubla Khan (3)
- 51 Athene the Maiden's temple (9)
- 52 A sincere form of growth (8)
- 53 He gave his rights away for much less than a Christmas dinner! (4)
- 55 Straight and to the point (12)
- 57 Nothing like Christmas dinners, for example (7, 5)
- 59 Improbable purses (4)
- 60 Look quietly and receive change (8)
- 61 They are much longer these days! (9)
- 63 "Il ne faut pas etre plus royaliste que le . . . " (3)
- 65 Drop your buttonhole on the Kop? (4, 6)
- 66 It's the most you can expect of a long skirt mother (7)
- 67 Ripe sienna disturbs a woman of France (10)
- 68 Attractiveness of the Dutch army (5)
- 69 Christmas stocking fillings, for example, may cause them (11)
- 72 Seven years married in the film world could make you feel it (5)
- 79 The love of a Cremona (7)

- 81 Ellis, Acton or Currer (4)
- 82 Ideas is not on in this form (7)
- 83 Loud like a cow or a river! (7)
- 84 "For he on honey-dew hath ..." (3)
- 85 French priest's remedy (4)
- 86 With which a clerk can find some of his Christmas dinner, perhaps (8)
- 87 Arranges people in pairs, or sticks by the dozen in boxes! (5-5)
- 88 All the uses of Hamlet's world were also weary, stale, and unprofitable. Fie on't! (4)
- 91 Confined close in the end (7)
- 93 Begs wet or fine without alternative arrangement for something to eat (7-4)
- 94 Under which were moonwashed apples of wonder (8)
- 95 Moved bales of fur (5)
- 96 Inviolability of disturbed city ants (8)
- 97 Swedes lie about a small white alpine flower (9)
- 98 Nine from my true love for Christmas (8)

Clues Down

- 1 Spring flower (8)
- 2 He hives off to work! (8)
- 3 Wenceslas foot impression (4)
- 4 Accomplish strange realities without it (7)
- 6 Old, this hymn (9)
- 7 In underwear I tag back one on a line of enquiry (13)
- 8 Silken wool cloth (6)
- 9 Worker in pantomime (3)
- 10 Keep at it (3)
- 11 Old suet mixed with noise (7)
- 12 Gift bearer of the 5 variety (4)
- 13 They come joyful and triumphant (8)
- 14 Forelock tuggers? (8)
- 15 One kind of detective (8)
- 18 Uncommon union (5, 7)
- 20 Incite—with breakfast food? (3, 2)
- 21 Thus forth in Yorkshire is sufficient (5)
- 26 He just looks for mistakes (5, 6)
- 28 Ventilate armour—by post (3, 4)
- 33 This for the meringue (3, 5)

- 35 But a hit on the head with it could have the opposite effect! (4, 9)
- 38 Present at this time of the year (9, 4)
- 39 Heard in 23's song (6, 5)
- 40 Off the cuff (11)
- 41 Lug brick car around the West End (7, 4)
- 42 Colourful garment (7, 4)
- 43 One tends to slacken it a little at Christmas (5, 6)
- 44 You get what you ask for (7, 4)
- 48 Hill spy assumes feminine role (7)
- 49 Yule cat jumps around sharply (7)
- 54 Christmas panto villain (7, 4)
- 56 Film story (8)
- 58 Whose plans go adrift? (2, 4, 3, 3)
- 62 Money spinner (8, 5)
- 64 Casual ring without a finger (3-4)
- 70 Lynx toe I change to plastic (8)
- 71 Edentate (9)
- 73 Mad bangs (8)
- 74 See 15 across
- 75 When taken this does not mean you go places (5)
- 76 Branch out into writing (5)
- 77 You can't have this by yourself (8)
- 78 Stirs it as a get-together (8)
- 80 Important comedy character (7)
- 83 James Elroy (7)
- 84 What sweet Afton did (6)
- 89 It's wrong for the horse to run backwards (4)
- 90 Bridge noise (4)
- 92 See 5
- 93 Grisly end of a foxy trait (3)

CROSSWORD WINNERS

The winners of the last 'Contact' crossword were:

Mrs. Margaret Brent, of Consumer accounts, North Wirral District.

Mrs. Ann McCallum, Revenue Cost Section, Head Office.

The prizes for £2 each are being sent to these ladies.

OVER TO NORWEB

After 21 years with MANWEB, Mr. Edward Cardin, a meter reader/collector in our North Mersey District, has now left us to work for our neighbours Norweb.

Ted, a family man and a keen "Evertonian," will be missed by his many friends in Liverpool who subscribed to present him with a farewell gift.

Mr. Cardin, centre, with Mr. G. Shoesmith, centre right, (District Administrative Officer) who made the presentation of parting gifts from colleagues, some of whom are seen in the picture.



Leaving Liverpool and North Mersey Districts

Appointed Salesman

Another young man to leave North Mersey District, Mr. David Biggs, senior draughtsman has now taken up an appointment as salesman for Meccano Limited. David joined the Board at Southport in 1964. On behalf of his colleagues in the District, he was presented with a parting gift by Mr. C. Shimmin (System Engineer).

MUM'S THE WORD

The departure of two very popular young ladies from our Liverpool District, Mrs. Barbara Christian and Mrs. Ann Jones, took a little light out of the lives of our Commercial colleagues there. They were both leaving for the same reason, to prepare for motherhood, and very lovely they looked too.

Barbara, centre left, was a vocational worker with the Board at one time and must have liked us so much that when she left school, she worked full-time, starting as a clerk in 1962. Shortly afterwards, she became a trainee demonstrator, then

demonstrator and finally senior demonstrator.

Ann, centre right, worked for a couple of firms in Liverpool before joining the Board in 1965 as a trainee demonstrator. She soon became a senior demonstrator and since October last year, she has worked as a sales representative. Ann won the title "Girl from MANWEB" in 1969 and she did a great job.

We wish both girls every happiness in the future with perfect offsprings and nights free from disturbance!



= Retirement

Mr. A. FAIRHURST

A man with a pleasant disposition and a keen sense of humour was the description given by colleagues of Mr. Albert (Bert) Fairhurst who retired recently.

Bert joined the industry 26 years ago working for the Liverpool Corporation Electric Supply Department, later moving over to the CEGB at Lister Drive power station. In 1960 he obtained a post in the Purchasing Section at MANWEB Head Office where he remained until the move to Chester. He then transferred to Liverpool District and worked as a clerk in the Engineering Section and more recently in the Material Control Section.

He is interested in all kinds of sport and for over 21 years he was treasurer of the Bowls Section of the Liverpool Electric Power and Lighting Sports and Welfare Club.

We join with the many friends who knew and worked with Bert in offering him and his wife our very best wishes to them both for a long and happy retirement.

Pensioner's Outing

A party of Liverpool pensioners and their wives enjoyed a day out recently visiting the Head Office of the Midlands Electricity Board where they were entertained by the committee and members of that Board's retired group.

After lunch and a visit to the Board's sports club, the Merseyside visitors were entertained by a concert party, returning to the MEB Head Office for tea. A short 'Bingo' session followed, and our retired colleagues arrived back at Thingwall Road, Liverpool, in time for a buffet and sing-song, to round off a most enjoyable day.

Group Manager Mr. Harry Telfer, who joined the pensioners for most of the outing, expressed thanks on their behalf to their Midlands Board hosts.

GOLDEN WEDDINGS

Boxing Day will mark 50 years of marriage for Mr. Jack Tideswell, of Crewe, and his wife Elizabeth. Prior to his retirement Mr. Tideswell served the industry for 44 years.

On behalf of their many friends we wish them both, many more years of happy marriage.

Another 50-year wedding anniversary on December 26th, will be celebrated by Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Burton, who, although they have retired to Welshpool, they will be spending Christmas and their anniversary with their son in Solihull. Ralph, who retired in 1960, was the senior assistant engineer in charge of the Board's Test House, then at Pumpfields.



Messrs. Charlie Murdoch, left, and Alf Kinrade.

VISITORS

OUR two friends, pictured above, are the only two remaining on the panel of visitors to retired colleagues in the Liverpool area. The scheme to ensure that retired members of the Board in the area were visited regularly was recommended by the No. 1 Local Sub-Committee (formerly Area 1) of the Manual Workers Benevolent Society eight years ago. Since then, the panel of visitors has varied in number due to ill health attacking some of its members.

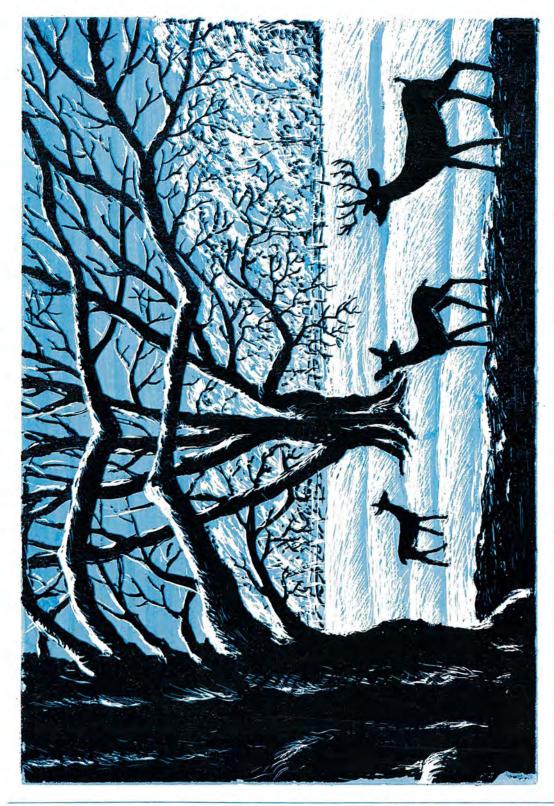
The two stalwarts who are facing the mammoth task of keeping in touch with the ever-growing list of pensioners, are to be commended on their fine efforts.

Mr. Alf Kinrade joined the Liverpool Corporation Electric Supply Department in 1934 after a period with various electrical contractors in Liverpool. He once worked on the electrical installations in the first Mersey Tunnel. He retired from full-time work in February 1967 when he was an installation inspector working from the Pumpfields depot. He started on his pensioner visits 18 months later, fitting these in with the part-time job he is still doing with our Liverpool District.

Alf and his wife Lena have two sons, Alf junior who is married and now lives in Australia, and Cliff, who once worked for MANWEB and is now area manager for Thorn Electric.

After more than 40 years' service in the industry, Mr. Charlie Murdoch retired from his job as mains maintenance engineer in February 1969. Charlie began his career as a jointer's mate with Liverpool Corporation and at one time was designated as a Street Box Examiner! From 1942 to 46 he served as an electrician in the Royal Engineers spending most of his time in Germany.

Charlie, a widower, has a daughter, Diane, who is married and now living in Pennsylvania, USA.



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