

CONTACT



H.R. Hughes 77.

Christmas 1977



Part of the 'top table' at the EAW conference. with Mr. Cowan on his feet.

“Decision Urgently Needed”—Chief Com. Officer

THE DECISION on the fast breeder nuclear reactor is one which Britain “cannot afford to put off” said Mr. Matt Cowan, our Chief Commercial Officer, speaking to 200 delegates attending the annual Area Conference of the Electrical Association for Women at Colwyn Bay recently.

The fast breeder, he said, would enable us to produce electricity “reasonably cheaply for ages and ages.” There was no other way to be reasonably confident about reasonably-priced

electricity in the future. Mr. Cowan warned that while life without gas and oil would be possible, life without electricity would mean that our very civilisation would be threatened.

“I suggest that your branches discuss ‘Life without adequate electricity’ and make your own minds up about nuclear energy. Men make most of the decisions in Britain, but women give more thought to their children’s future. Perhaps nuclear power is the subject where the lead will have to be given by the women of this country,” he added.

Earlier the delegates—from the 16 EAW branches in Merseyside and North Wales—had heard their national director, Mrs. Ann McMullen, urge them to take advantage of the Association’s new campaign to spread information on the nuclear issue under the slogan “Learn About Nuclear Energy.”

Mrs. McMullen reported that during the first six months of this year the EAW had recruited 800 new members—100 of them in the MANWEB area branches. The branches with the best results in this direction were presented with awards by Mrs. Dodds, wife of our Chairman.

The delegates to the conference were officially welcomed by Councillor Mrs. A. Robinson, Mayor of Colwyn, who said that she would like to see a branch of the Association set up locally.

A section of the audience drawn from EAW branches all over the MANWEB area.





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The Chairman's Message

SINCE I shall retire as Chairman at the end of this month, this Christmas Message is of particular significance to me. I shall be sad to leave you all but, nevertheless, I count myself fortunate to have been with MANWEB for sufficient time to see through to completion the great schemes of electrical expansion in Merseyside and rural electrification in North Wales, schemes which have brought great benefit to both urban and rural communities.

The changes in basic organisation which were introduced subsequently have also been completed. Any further changes should, I believe, be introduced by a successor to me who can also see them through to completion. Our achievements in recent years in streamlining the organisation have been considerable. All resources are now more efficiently deployed, the new Districts are much more effective organisations than the old and links with Head Office are much firmer. The response of individuals to emergencies continues to reflect the highest sense of duty to the public.

Visits to Employees' Meetings throughout the Area have been among the most enjoyable of my experiences and I have been deeply grateful for the warmth of my reception at all times. I hope to pay valedictory visits to each District during the next few weeks but would like to say immediately how indebted I am to you all for your first-class teamwork and for so consistently placing the public interest above your own.

Please accept my thanks and my good wishes to you and your families, not only for happiness this Christmas and the New Year, but also for your long-term future in this great public industry.

OUR COVER PICTURE
was taken from a
painting by Hugh Richard
Hughes from our Head Office
Display Section.

Seasonal Greetings from the
'Contact' Editorial Staff

Keith Baldwin, John F. Perry, Sam Doughty
and all our Correspondents.



Mr. John Scudamore



Mr. Ron Patterson



Mr. Denis Dodds

No. 11 LAC EMPLOYEES MEETING

Pension Fund & Nuclear Power

THE retired Executive Officer, Superannuation and Salaries, Mr. Ron Patterson, and the Board Chairman, Mr. Denis Dodds, were the two main speakers at the Head Office Annual Employees Meeting.

MANWEB Deputy Secretary, Mr. John Scudamore, Chairman of the No. 11 LAC welcomed delegates and introduced a CEBG film which showed the extent to which the Generating Board went to ensure safety in the nuclear power stations.

After much ill-informed and some near hysterical press and television reporting on the dangers of nuclear power it was an opportunity for staff to see the industry's case that nuclear power represents no danger with the stringent safety precautions which were rigorously enforced in power stations.

Mr. Scudamore then briefly reviewed the work of the Local Advisory Committee over the year and followed this by introducing the guest speaker Mr. Ron Patterson, who had joined the industry in 1931, and had served most of his working life in the field of superannuation and was acknowledged as something of an expert on the subject.

Mr. Patterson described how the administration of the superannuation funds was carried out. There were 20 members on the management committee, half nominated by the industry's management and the other half by election of the members of the scheme. Ron Patterson had been one of the 10 elected members for the past 12 years and was currently offering himself for re-election.

Both the staff and industrial schemes had such management committees and the members were trustees of the schemes and were responsible for management and investment of funds.

The 12 District Management Committees are delegated certain responsibilities of the main committee. A standing sub-committee of four of the main committee members deal with detailed day-to-day policy.

A joint investment committee for both schemes determines policy with Investment Manager Mr. Alan Unwin and his deputy Mr. Bill Lund, carrying out the investment operation with the aid of specialist advisors.

The £750 million invested in the two schemes is split into 40% equities, 40% in property, agriculture and forestry, and 20% in fixed interest stocks.

Having expanded further on the detail of some investments Mr. Patterson turned to the benefit side of the scheme. Every member or their estate will receive not less than they had paid into the scheme.

He then turned to the question of refund of payments for those members leaving the scheme, with a particular emphasis on the female members. As an official broadsheet was about to be published covering the whole subject, Mr. Patterson asked that we did not report his interpretation in print so as not to confuse the issue.

"I am sure you will not find a scheme which provides better cover for your dependants and yourself throughout the whole of your service," said Mr. Patterson.

There is a death benefit for members who die in service, ranging from contributions plus interest to four years salary, plus child allowances, and widows pensions for those who have elected to contribute.

Guarantees exist for early retirement whether through ill-health or not, or death after early retirement, and all pensions are inflation proof.



Above and below are pictured just some of the delegates . . .

There are options available to members such as buying additional years of service, death benefit payable to trustees to avoid next of kin other than one's spouse having to pay tax, surrender of part of pension to provide an annuity for wife or other dependants and the conversion of the lump sum or part of it into a pension.

Finally Mr. Patterson stated he was convinced of the value of the scheme into which he had paid for 42 years as he had in three years on pension received more than he had paid into the fund.

Following Mr. Patterson, MANWEB Chairman, Mr. Denis Dodds, reflected on his own impending retirement and that of some of his colleagues.

The industry had suffered a traumatic few years Mr. Dodds told his Head Office staff, but Government had now realised that by restricting prices they were distorting the demand for electricity.

The oil crisis had caused the equivalent of what would have been considered a military defeat in the last century, with its effect on the lives of our people.

However last year was a landmark, we had been allowed to adjust our prices and made a small profit. This meant we in the electricity industry were no longer a drain on the taxpayer or the treasury.

There had been an overall increase in the sales of

electricity and there were signs that we and the country were on the road to recovery but we must not employ more plant or staff than we needed and keep costs down.

There was only one way to fill the energy gap which would open at the end of the century, the Chairman continued, with his eye fixed on the future of the industry. Nuclear power was the only practical answer, only about 5% could be met by wind, wave or other more fanciful means of generation.

Mr. Dodds hoped the decision to build a commercial fast breeder station would be taken soon to keep the nation's options open. It took 12 years to build and plan a power station, and if we failed to start on one soon we should lose the chance to keep abreast of nuclear technology.

Finally Mr. Dodds spoke about a new consultative document which asked for ideas on the joint consultative machinery within the industry. The newly formed District Joint Co-ordinating Council (Great Britain) had replaced the former DJAC and wanted to know the staff's thoughts on the future operation of the Local Advisory machinery.

The meeting closed after an open forum session in which several written questions were placed before the 150 delegates present.

. . . who attended the Head Office Annual Employees meeting.



SANTA FROZEN—MANWEB CALLED IN

National Elves and Fairies' Union complain

Dateline—Brian Spring for 'Contact'—North Pole

SANTA CLAUS, well known toy manufacturer and distributor has recently been looking very miserable following a particularly hard winter at his North Pole base. With the rising cost of raw materials in the toy industry, Santa told our reporter that central heating was a luxury he couldn't afford. **'The only nose round here redder than Rudolph's is mine,'** he said

A spokesman for NEFU (*National Elves and Fairies Union*) said today 'My members are prepared to stick to the 10% pay guidelines, but we would like to see an improvement in conditions. Mr. Claus has always been regarded as a good employer, but this excuse about the high cost of central heating won't hold water—or rather ice.' He pointed out that NEFU's brother in GNU (*Gnomes National Union*) would be watching developments carefully since many of their members would be fishing on people's lawns over the Christmas period,

suffering from the weather and passing dogs.

A central heating and home insulation expert from MANWEB inspected Santa's house following NEFU's comments 'No problem, this looks like a job for heating plus'.

'Plus what?' Santa retorted and the Man From Manweb smiled. 'Plus insulation; he explained. 'Take those reindeer of yours. Where are they now'. Santa looked round. 'On the roof, I expect', he said, 'practicing landings. I can't get them down from there these days.' 'I'm not surprised' the MFM, smiled, 'it's probably

the warmest place in the house, that's where a lot of your heat's going'.

At this the elves and fairies nodded knowingly, and some of the colder ones slipped outside to join the reindeer on the roof. The MFM continued. 'Proper loft insulation is included as part of our heating plus package. For £199 you get two storage radiators, 420 sq. ft. of loft insulation—and the whole lot fully installed. That's really good value when you consider that you couldn't get a decent reindeer for that nowadays.' He glanced nervously at the roof. 'That's all very well', grumbled Santa. 'But I really can't have the place full of mess and bother now, you know. It is the middle of my busiest season'.

'There wouldn't be any bother', replied the MFM patiently. 'Electric central heating is the easiest way to have central heating installed, so you could have your two radiators in, and your loft insulated in no time at all'.

'What about the workers?', piped up an elfin voice from the back. 'Easy', the MFM said. 'When you want more radiators you simply add them whenever you like'.

Santa glanced nervously at a wallchart labelled 'Income' and 'Outcome'. 'Bet they cost a fortune to run', he said. 'Not at all', the MFM quickly assured him. 'Storage radiators run on low cost off peak electricity using the white meter'.

A nearby dwarf woke up with a start. 'A Snow White Meter', he muttered, 'I like it, I like it', and promptly fell asleep again. 'I understand that', said Santa, 'but how much will it actually cost to run, that's what I want to know.'

The MFM thought for a moment. 'How much do you pay out per round when one of this lot has a birthday?', he asked, waving a hand at the crowd. 'No, don't tell me. I bet it is more than £1.35. That's what you'd pay out



each week to run each radiator'. He warmed to his theme. 'Not bad, is it?'

'H-m-m, £199, mused Santa. 'I assume I can pay for it on my quarterly account. But I don't want to keep paying out for maintenance,' he growled. The MFM looked horrified. 'Once these radiators are in, they usually run for years without needing any maintenance, or giving you any problems', he replied. 'In fact, central heating with storage radiators is one of the most troublefree systems you can choose'.

'But you know, I'm out a lot on shop visits and deliveries', Santa said. 'I mean, how easy are they to operate. This lot are very willing, but they're not very bright'. He leaned forward confidentially. 'Do you know, last week I came back and found wheels on all the teddy bears?' 'Really,' the MFM suppressed a smile. 'No trouble at all. The whole system is fully automatic it works itself'. 'Capital, capital',

Santa boomed. 'We'll have it'. A cheer went up from the assembled NEFU members. 'We'll be warm, we'll be warm', they chanted, dancing up and down with glee.

Our reporter retained his interest in the Claus family, however and a few days ago was passing when he thought he would call in to see how the system was working.

A delighted NEFU representative met him. 'Great, great,' he beamed, 'We're warm, productivity is up, Mr Claus is happy, even Rudolph's nose isn't so red. But' he added quietly, 'if you want a good story in a couple of weeks keep an eye on these reindeer, there may be a little trouble from them. You see, they reckon it's so warm and comfortable *inside*, they don't see why they should have to go *outside* in the cold and snow delivering all those parcels. Dancer did say something about getting up a petition ?

Cartoons by Jeff Baker, Head Office Display Dept.



Mr. Jim Fisher

OUR NEW CHIEF ENGINEER

Mr. Jim Fisher, MANWEB's Deputy Chief Engineer for the past eight years, has been appointed Chief Engineer with effect from January 1st. He succeeds Mr. Frank Brown, who retires at the end of the year.

Mr Fisher began his career with MANWEB in 1949 as a graduate trainee, after obtaining his degree at Liverpool University. A succession of engineering posts followed, including that of assistant chief engineer (planning) prior to his appointment as Deputy Chief Engineer. He is immediate past Chairman of the Mersey and North Wales Centre of the Institution of Electrical Engineers, and he is Chairman of the local fund-raising committee of the Electrical and Electronics Industries Benevolent Association. Other interests include music and fishing. During the second world war he served as a pilot with the Fleet Air Arm.

Mr. Fisher, who is married with one son and one daughter, lives at Queens Park, Chester.



Mr. Joe Winchester



Mr. Denis Dodds.



Mr. Sid Warburton

No. 9 LAC EMPLOYEES CONFERENCE

“Keep the Nuclear Option Open”—*Chairman*

THE GUEST speaker at Oswestry Employees' Meeting was the Chairman of the Board, Mr. Denis Dodds. He spoke about the immediate past, the present and the future of the electricity industry and MANWEB, and the need to keep the nation's energy options open by building a fast breeder nuclear power station.

Group Manager Mr. Joe Winchester chaired the meeting and welcomed delegates to the Victoria Rooms in Oswestry, with a specially warm greeting for the retired employees present. He introduced the guests from Head Office and was succeeded to the rostrum by LAC secretary Mr. Sid Warburton.

Mr. Warburton extracted one or two points from the Committee report. He was concerned about the increase in accidents in the District, totalling 74, a 23% increase. Most of these could have been avoided.

Mr. Dodds welcomed the chance to visit the District, where the work was done, as he usually had to work in places where only policy was discussed.

He congratulated the District, which had the largest area and the next smallest population in the Board, on their work over the last year. Installation and Service had shown a profit and appliance sales were up, both contrary to the trend.

Some Head Office guests and delegates.



The Chairman appreciated the work being done by the Engineers, especially in such a widespread district. The accounts and administrative staff he knew too, had many problems, with the introduction of the Code of Practice and discount schemes.

Turning from Oswestry to the wider issue of MANWEB and the electricity industry, Mr. Dodds could see the recovery of the industry and the nation after recent hard times. These had started with the Yom Kippur War in the Middle East and the subsequent oil restrictions and price rises had crucified the trade of all western nations.

The oil price increase and that of coal—up by five times—caused the eventual rise in electricity charges, despite Government price restraint initially.

The recession had caused unemployment, and some trade union leaders wished the electricity industry to employ more people than they needed, and were urging that the industry built power stations which it did not need.

This makes matters worse, Mr. Dodds explained. The industry had to be competitive and it must bring resources into line with demand. Over-manning and surplus plant would send it spiralling into the ground.

It was essential we had to do what we could to create jobs, and this had been done within the Board, but the new idea of a Job Creation Scheme, Government sponsored, was the right way to relieve unemployment. It was better to have the cost spread over the whole community rather than impose it on one business, which would ensure bankruptcy.

Gradually the country was coming out of the slump, industry was recovering and MANWEB too, had made a small profit in its last trading year—

small in relation to the size of our turnover. For the first time in several years we were not a drain on the community.

Moving on to the subject of joint consultation, Mr. Dodds told delegates of the new joint consultative machinery which was in the process of being set up within the industry. The present National Joint Advisory Council had become too large and a more compact National Joint Coordinating Council (Great Britain) had been formed and had produced a consultative document asking for suggestions on how area and district level consultative machinery should be organised. It was a genuine attempt to get grass roots feeling. It was Mr. Dodds' opinion that management and employees were too remote from one another, and this new machinery being set up was an opportunity to unite all sides of the industry.

The long term policy for energy concerned the Chairman. He saw the 'energy gap' which all the trends forecast for the end of the century only being effectively met by nuclear power. Presently the nation was using the equivalent, taking all energy forms into account, of 350 million tons of coal a year. By the year 2000 it would be 600 million tons according to forecasts.

North Sea oil and gas would have run out, Arabian oil would be too expensive, and coal also might be too expensive. To meet the gap there had been many suggestions, but if it was not closed it would mean a 20% drop in the standard of living.

Wind power, solar power, wave power and other alternative sources would merely nibble at the problem. Nuclear power was the only answer. Mr. Dodds wanted to see work started on a fast breeder reactor station in the next few years if only to keep the options of the country open. If a commercial breeder station was not built soon—it took



A thoughtful quartet.

12 years to build a station—the technology would be lost.

Public knowledge is very slow at realising what would happen in 20 years, it was imperative that the right decision was made now to plan and build one breeder station.

In closing the Board Chairman commented that insulation was an important factor in conserving energy, and the Board must promote its use, as was being done in the current 'Heating Plus' campaign. The comprehensive effort and support in the Oswestry District had set a first class example for MANWEB to follow.

The open forum included a wide range of questions, one of which accused the Board of not offering discount on appliances and effectively competing with discount houses. The Chief Commercial Officer, Mr. Matt Cowan, layed the ghost that MANWEB were not 'discounters' pointing out that we did offer sensible cut prices and that some discount warehouses had gone out of business, and those that were left were being forced into offering service to stay alive. Their prices were now in line with those MANWEB offered.

Dancing the rest of the night away after the meeting.



Talking Notes

A 'SPECIAL' OCCASION

TWENTY-THREE years' service with the North Wales Police Special Constabulary were recognised recently when **Arthur Thompson**, our senior energy sales rep in Clwyd District, was introduced to the Duke of Edinburgh and to Home Secretary Mr. Merlyn Rees during the course of a Royal Visit to the Metropolitan Police Training Centre, Hendon.

Arthur was one of 3,000 men and women including regular police, "Specials", police cadets and others who assembled at Hendon when the Queen and the Duke paid their Visit.

Joining the "Specials" way back in 1954 at Rhyl Arthur carried out point duties in Summer traffic rushes, together with night patrol work. After training during the Winter and at weekends he was promoted Sergeant in 1960, Inspector in 1965, and Chief Inspector in 1969. Now he is in charge of

'C' Division, covering Rhyl, Prestatyn, and the surrounding area, with 40 "Specials" under his command.

Two commendations have come his way—one for arresting an escaped prisoner, and the other for capturing a man who had stolen a car after giving chase in a patrol vehicle.

Arthur joined MANWEB in 1948 as a meter-reader collector based at Abbey House. He became a sales rep in 1960 and senior energy sales representative ten years later.

Our very proud policeman, Arthur Thompson, *front left*, meets the Duke of Edinburgh during the recent Royal visit to the Police Training Centre at Hendon. Just getting in on the picture, *left*, is Arthur's wife, Joyce.



During the war he served in France, Belgium, Holland and Germany with the Royal Artillery—a point for discussion with the Home Secretary, who had noticed his war medals and Police Long Service Medal.

His association with the law is a family affair, as his wife Joyce has been a clerk with the North Wales Police at Divisional H.Q., Prestatyn, for the past seven years.

Fire Watch Alert

A decision to organise nighttime fire-watching rota at our Queensferry depot for the duration of the firemen's strike led to the early detection of what could have been a very nasty emergency situation.

Stores foreman **Graham Lewis** and chargehand store-keeper **Ray Hughes** were on duty when they noticed a strong smell of oil in the air. A check on a nearby pumping station—an installation on the Shell pipeline from Anglesey—revealed oil leaking from one of the valves. A quick alarm call brought three fire appliances quickly followed by Shell engineers and workmen, to the scene. On this occasion the prompt action of our Queensferry colleagues nipped a potentially dangerous situation in the bud at a very early stage.

Shortly after the event, our alert storemen received a very nice letter from the Chief Constable of the North Wales Police, congratulating them on

their 'prompt observations and expeditious reporting' which prevented what might have been 'a serious situation.' He added his thanks for their 'public spirited actions.'

Keeping it dark!

A Chester shopkeeper was sent a copy of the Electricity Council's newspaper *Circuit News*, containing an article describing an air-conditioning system installed in his shop by our Dee Valley District colleagues.

Back came a note—"I've just received *Circuit News*, for which I thank you, but I can't read it yet because we haven't any electricity on!"

Clwyd Capers

Our staff at Cefndy Road certainly live well. Take their morning break for example. If they desire a 'bacon butty' with their cuppa then, as they arrive at the office, they put their names down in a book provided by the canteen staff.

Recently however, a couple of members of Head Office staff—with their usual efficiency—on arrival at District Office, signed the 'Visitor's Book.'

The canteen staff are patiently waiting for them to claim their 'bacon butties!'

* * *

Still at Clwyd—the following message was recently broadcast over the Tannoy system—

"Due to a fault in the Tannoy system, will any members of the staff not able to hear this please ring . . ."

Chess Jamboree

Deep concentration was the order of the day in the Head Office restaurant on November 26th, with 33 games of chess taking place simultaneously.

The occasion was the annual Chess Jamboree, organised by the chess section of Head Office Sports and Social Club. Eleven

teams, drawn from as far afield as Bolton and Rhyl, took part, while an international flavour was provided by a team of Iranian students currently somewhere in Clwyd.

Predictably Chester YMCA 'A' team retained the 'John Deterding Cup' and by doing so achieved a hat-trick of wins. Their score was a near-perfect 5½ out of 6.

By scoring 2½ the MANWEB team finished 8th. Our players were **Steve Holmes** (captain) **Bob Blair**, **Norman Burnett**, **Dave Newall**, **John McInerney** and **Paul Dolan**. John was the sole winner, but solid draws came from Steve, Bob and Dave.

Following the main event 30 players entered a 'Lighting' tournament. Both prizes went to youngsters, underlining the fact that chess can be a game for everyone.

The Jamboree is now established as a major event in the local chess calendar, and the day's success was a tribute to the hard work put in by organiser **Mike Hughes** (Plant and Construction) with the help of Bill Turner, of the YMCA.

Fond Farewell

Gwynedd District suffered a dual loss recently with the

departure of **Barbara Keeling** (cashier) and her husband **Geoff** (supervisor in the Amendment section). They have left the industry to run a newsagent's shop in Christchurch.

Barbara and Geoff threw a farewell party, with chicken and chips all round. On behalf of their many friends they were presented with some wedge-wood pottery by **L. C. Jones** (principal assistant, Consumers Accounts), a clock on behalf of the meter readers by **Eric Roberts**, and a bottle of champagne from the hands of **Olwen Hefina Hughes**.

They will be much missed by their friends at Gwynedd—who wish them every success in their new business venture.

Stork Visit

Our heartiest congratulations go to **John Welsh** (2nd engineer—Technical) at Head Office and his wife **Jean**, who formerly worked in the Revenue Section, on the birth of a daughter, Emma Louise.

WANTED

Sharp 2.8 (or larger) lens, approx. 50 mm, for Exakta bayonet. Contact: Bill Chirgwin, 28 Dean's Close, Fairfield Estate, Bagilft.

A champagne toast to Geoff and Barbara Keeling, right, from Olwen Hughes on the occasion of their departure from Gwynedd District to start up in their own business.



Five-a-Side Champs

The Deeside Leisure Centre was the venue for the 1977 Chester Sports and Social Club's annual Five-a-Side Championship. *H. N. Demons* were the worthy winners when they beat *Black Shadows* by two goals to nil in the final. The champions were a team of MANWEB students all studying for their H.N.D.s and the runners up were mainly accounts staff.

The 24 teams had competed in four leagues of six teams each, the top two going on to the quarter finals then by a knockout contest to find the champions.

Once again the excellent organisation was performed by Club secretary Gren Roberts and the prizes presented by the Club Chairman Harry Foreman.



The Champions, '*H. N. Demons*,' left to right, back row, Fred Wooder, George Pye, and Steve Lloyd, front, Richard Lumb and Keith Dyer (captain).



'The men in the middle,' from the Clwyd Referees Association, from left to right, Mike McManus, Tony Ellis, Ron Bridges and Bill Hughes.



Runners-up, left, with Mr. Harry Foreman, Club Chairman. Left to right, Richard Bromley, John Kennedy, Brian Carman (capt.), John Burns, Mark Buchanan, and Peter Ledsham.

In a separate competition, four teams played to find the MANWEB Ladies Champions. With sleight of foot '*Magicelle*' ran out as winners. They are, pictured bottom left, Cheryl Hunt, Kim Bradley, Viv Ellins (capt.), Jill Hockaday, Liz Jones and Sally Baker. Runners-up were '*Us and Them*,' pictured below, Sue Joinson (capt.), Sybil Williams, Josephine Gough, Linda Harris, Dorothy Cooper and Doreen Horan.



'CONTACT' PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION—1977

PRIZEWINNING PICTURES



Black & White Section

BEST
PICTURE
"Full Belt"
by
Mr. William
Chirgwin
(Queensferry
Stores)

More
pictures
overleaf





Colour Transparency Section

1st PRIZE

"Harbour Morning"
by Mr. Ulrich H. Koos
Mid-Cheshire District

2nd PRIZE

"The Crypt"
by Mr. Harry Sharples
Test Laboratory
Queensferry
(centre left)

3rd PRIZE

"Abergavenny Market"
by Mr. Robert H. Woodall, Mid-Cheshire District



Humour Section

BEST PICTURE

"You can't have everything!"
by Mr. Ulrich H. Koos, Mid-Cheshire District

COMMENDED *"The Helper"*
by Mr. Raymond C. Stobbart
Clwyd District



Colour Print Section

1st PRIZE

"Snowdon Massive"

by Mr. Alan Reid
Technical Section
Head Office ▷



2nd PRIZE

"Tryfan in Winter"

by Mr. Chris. J. Kilfoyle
M.S.U.
Head Office



3rd PRIZE

"Who's Beautiful?"

by Mr. Fred. Hannath
(retired)
Gwynedd District ▷



Animal Section

BEST PICTURE *"Three Weeks Old"*
by Mr. Chris. J. Kilfoyle, M.S.U., Head Office



Human Section

BEST
PICTURE

"Lynne and
Claire"

by

Mr. Gordon Hood
(Technical Section
Head Office)



Animal Section

COMMENDED

"Cuddles!"

by Mr. Gordon Lewer
(Display Section, Head Office)

Another title could have read—
"New cut-off Man from MANWEB!"

We sincerely thank all the 46 competitors who took the trouble to send in over 300 entries for this year's Photographic Competition.

The judges, Messrs. **John Lightfoot** (*Lightfoot and Newman, Chester*) and **Bill Griffiths** (*Head Photographer, Head Office*), were in agreement when commenting that a very high standard had been reached with many of the entries.

For those of you who may be thinking about next year's competition, we suggest that you study the title of the various sections, take a good look at the pictures you intend to submit, and then decide which section they will best be suited for.

THE WORLD ABOUT US

Group Manager Mr. Sid Fairclough may think he has problems with some of the customers in his District who illegally extract electricity by one means or another. However, a good friend of his, sent him the following news item from *The Windsor Star* in Ontario.

It shows that the world about us is very much the same as the world we live in!

UTILITIES FIGHT ANOTHER ENERGY CRISIS

NEW YORK (AP)—Gas and electricity thefts have prompted utilities to form squads of investigators to catch the culprits.

"There are always some people looking for something for nothing," said a spokesman for Consolidated Edison Co. of New York.

"But since the energy crisis, it isn't just poor people that we've seen doing this sort of thing. We've found it in fine apartment houses and large commercial establishments."

Devices used by power thieves range from sophisticated electronic gadgets and elaborate plumbing to dime-store magnets and washing machine hoses. Some meters have been adjusted to move

slowly or even backwards.

Clarence Eckelmann, manager of electric distribution for New Orleans Public Service Corp., heads a utility industry committee examining the situation.

"We first sensed the problem back in 1970, but in the fall of 1976, it exploded," he said. "In the late 1960s, an attitude developed that utility companies had no right to charge for the energy they generated and sold to you.

"Then we were hit by the recession that compounded it. Then inflation came along and the fuel problem that brought increases in rates."

Last year, Con Edison investigators uncovered 12,000 cases of theft and recovered \$6 million for the Company.

Florida Power and Light Co., the States largest power firm, recovered \$1.2 million last year. Most cases were settled out of court, but all 22 cases brought to

trial resulted in convictions.

Boston Edison Co. recovered \$200,000 for stolen energy last year, but estimates it lost \$1.8 million. Massachusetts Electric reported about 2,000 diversions were found last year, with \$213,000 recovered.

Earlier this year, the Commonwealth Edison Co. of Chicago reported as much as \$5 million of electricity may have been stolen when some businesses used the services of a gang of professional riggers.

In addition to criminal penalties utility firms point out the danger of stealing energy. Deaths related to power theft have been reported in Florida and New York.

"You can get hurt messing with these things," said Louis Muniz of Florida Power and Light. "You can get killed."

"It is very hazardous," added Eckelmann. "We believe there are burns, shocks, even more fatalities related to this, but of course they're rarely reported as such."

"Utility companies are battling back in other ways besides using inspectors. Some print warnings on meters and on advertisement inserts mailed with bills in addition, new locks are being installed on meters."

Epitaph—or Epigram?

Go placidly amid the noise and haste and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible without surrender, be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly and clearly and listen to others, even the dull and ignorant; they too have their story. Avoid loud and aggressive persons, they are vexations to the spirit. If you can compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter; for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.

Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time. Exercise caution in your business affairs for the world is full of trickery. But let not this blind you to what virtue there is; many persons

strive for high ideals; and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself. Especially do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment it is perennial as the grass. Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth. Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.

Beyond a wholesome discipline be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe, no less. Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be, and whatever your labours and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life keep peace with your soul. With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams it is still a beautiful world. Be careful. Strive to be happy.

Found in St. Paul's Church, Baltimore, 1692.

CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD

What better way to give your tum a chance to cope with the turkey and Christmas pudding than to settle down comfortably and ponder over this year's giant Christmas Crossword?

Our teaser is set by our old friend Mr. F. G. Lott, who for the third year running has performed the incredible feat of producing a fresh set of clues for the same "blank".

Prizes of £5 will go to the senders of the first three all-correct solutions drawn out of the hat. Closing date for receipt of entries—9th January.

Entries to *The Editor*, 'Contact', MANWEB, Sealand Road, Chester CH1 4LR. Plain paper entries will be accepted (but only one per person please). Open to all MANWEB employees, pensioners, and their families. Please mark your envelope 'Crossword.'

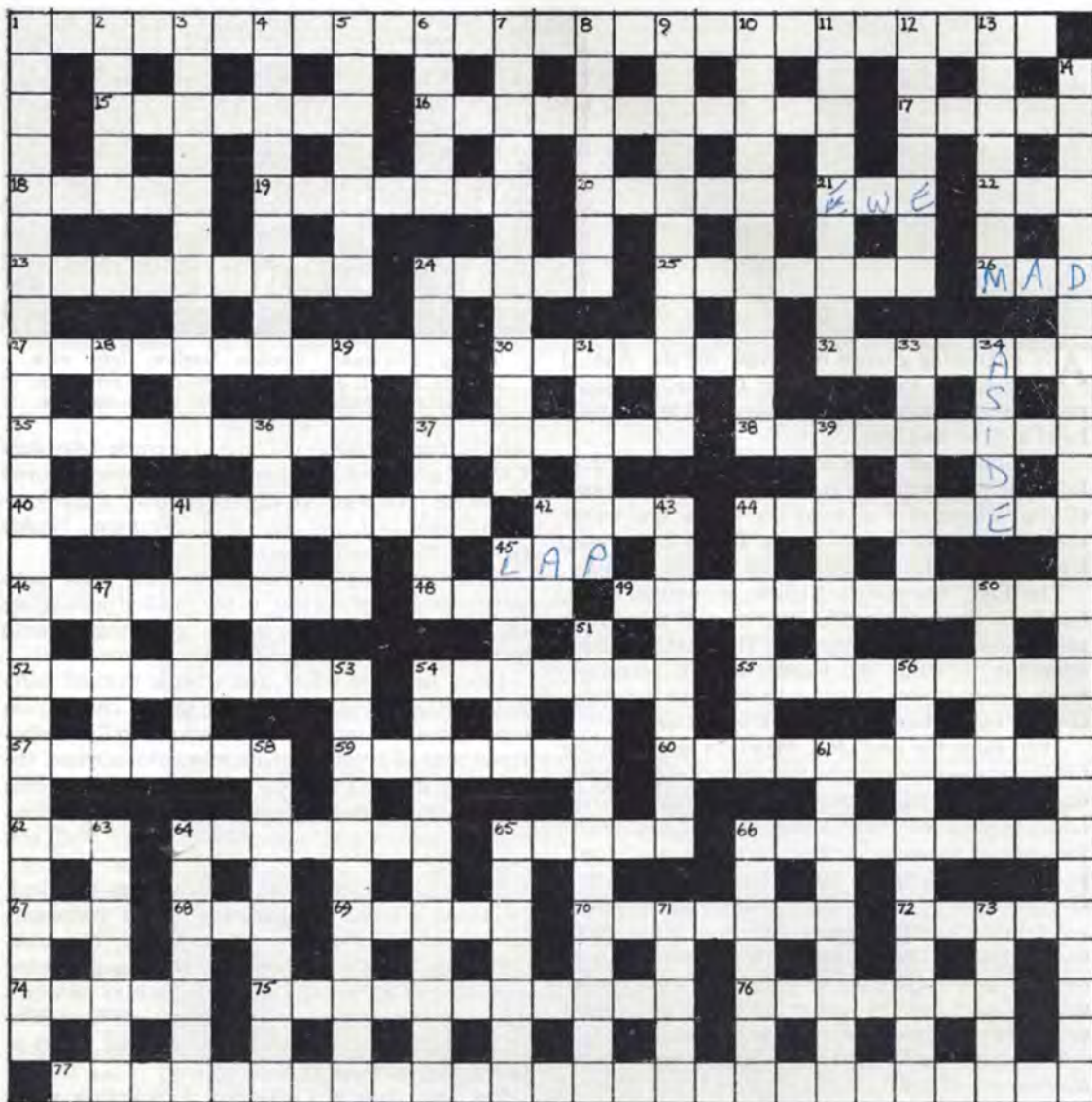
Clues Across

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 This one's so obvious you can't possibly miss it! (2.5.2.3 4.2.4.4) | 40 They would have had a negative reaction with George Washington, presumably (3.9) |
| 15 Most propitious time to work it back to mother (7) | 42 Little nut tree fruit (4) |
| 16 Took ring and became involved in a classical tie-up (7.4) | 44 Salesman could take exception to a second showing (9) |
| 17 "Now all the of England are on fire, And silken dalliance in the wardrobe lies." (<i>Henry V</i>) (5) | 45 A friend comes back round the course (3) |
| 18 Deirdre arrives in a state of gloom (5) | 46 New man begins like 23 with wild roses (9) |
| 19 Virile love for architectural relief (7) | 48 Gun's recoil at Wimbledon (4) |
| 20 Collect for a church service (5) | 49 Unusually bold line rare in the bull ring (12) |
| 21 You sound just like an animal! (3) | 52 Map routes for a long London run (5-4) |
| 22 Horse spur (3) | 54 Linguishes on a pony (7) |
| 23 Sue, dumb about county cricket, gave way under pressure (9) | 55 Sailors circle ten adrift, soaks up (9) |
| 24 Painfully quiet afterthought (5) | 57 Relatively nice pot gets broken (7) |
| 25 One hundred and three-toed sloth starts a quarrel, the cad (7) | 59 As the spokes of a bicycle wheel are to the hub (7) |
| 26 To stop water coming back is crazy (3) | 60 Fabulous scholar (11) |
| 27 The pirates rest, perhaps, while she undresses (5-6) | 62 Harmless aspirate! (3) |
| 30 This ally operates at night (7) | 64 Spoil counterfeit coin inventor (7) |
| 32 I'm plastered in paint—drums of it (7) | 65 Chesterton's donkey told them he also had his hour (5) |
| 35 Lady's sure unsettled, but confident (9) | 66 Broken air-bottle with three lobes (9) |
| 37 The wrong exit can be (7) | 67 Remembered by Miranda? (3) |
| 38 Departure of Old English singers in disarray (9) | 68 Third of a mile north of the waterfall in Shanghai (3) |
| | 69 Woven into the web of Desdemona's handkerchief (<i>Othello</i>) (5) |
| | 70 Yogi's colourful crocus (7) |
| | 72 Sacred river before a Greek letter (5) |

- 74 At such a time stood Dido with a willow in her hand (*M of V*) (5)
- 75 Well-informed, but uses no coins as change (11)
- 76 A kind of small salmon is a ground-nut (7)
- 77 Building proclamation by Kubla Khan? (*Coleridge*) (1.7.8.4.6)

Clues Down

- 1 They are not for depriving the church of its status (4-22)
- 2 Unpoetic form of 73 (5)
- 3 Post-post-prandial (5.6)
- 4 Many rub enamel the wrong way (9)
- 5 Tried embroidery (7)
- 6 The end of much fever in Holland (5)
- 7 Strait-laced (6-6)
- 8 Odds on to liars wandering in circles (7)
- 9 Definitely not (2.2.7)
- 10 Nice incomes contribute to knowing about everything (11)
- 11 Radical bitter-ender (9)
- 12 This page doesn't bother people who can't read (7)
- 13 Companion of Honour underdetermined in the dairy (7)
- 14 Unprofitable because poor light stops play? (3.4.2.3.5.3.6)
- 24 When Rama girds himself to toss a crepe suzette? (Fat Tuesday to you!) (5-4)
- 28 Concealed cameras see a civet quite plainly (5)
- 29 Not that a crooked lawyer is bashful (7)
- 31 Fellow the Spaniard met in church (6)
- 33 Sounds like beauty queen of Kent town can't handle the pack (7)
- 34 Unusual ideas on stage (5)
- 36 But it's not a lady's maid's wardrobe (7)
- 39 Opinions regarding piano fragments (7)
- 41 Fire, or part of one (7)
- 42 Syrinx player in the kitchen (3)
- 43 Assures me in a way to think again (9)



- 44 Doctor goes in after change to re-write report (7)
 45 Produces food by the pound (6)
 47 Blockhead, or worse if he's off it (5)
 50 Resin for the Spanish record company (5)
 51 Endless treasure house rearranged for a bride (3.9)
 53 Found at the end of the mint garden? (4.2.5)
 54 To lag on wing in disorderly game may not produce it (7.4)
 56 Phoned Rhoda about Olean-der (11)
 58 Singular record of an OT book (9)
 61 Straightened ornate tie to face the east (9)
 63 Supervises husbands (7)
 64 Second line troops (7)
 65 Strange if such a flower as the evening primrose (7)
 66 Whirlwind destroys root and all (7)
 71 These islands sound more Egyptian than Danish (5)
 73 Problematic form of 2 (5)

October Winners

About a dozen lads from Lister Drive, sent in the only all-correct entries. Whether these were a 'joint effort' or whether we have unsuspected genius we don't know, but in accordance with the Rules the three £2 prizes go to Messrs. D. Lewis, J. E. Langley and G. Corrin, all of the Meter Department.

New Style Conference for our Gwynedd District Staff



Group Chairman, Gordon Barlow, left, with Messrs. Russell Shaw, centre, and Harry Foreman, answering questions put by the staff—opposite.

AN interesting change of format for the Annual Conference for staff in our Gwynedd District proved very successful when it was held in a Bangor hotel a short time ago.

The Conference began much as usual with a buffet followed by a welcome from Mr. Jim Barraclough (*Group Manager*) who went on with a few words reviewing the work done by the Board and a peep into what the future could hold for the industry.

The LAC Secretary's Report, in written form, had been circulated to the District staff a few days prior to the Annual Conference. This enabled people attending to study the Report and, if necessary, bring up questions relating to it or to functions covered by the Local Advisory Committee.

Then came the new idea. Members attending the Conference separated into four groups—previously designated—so that each group had a fair representation of staff from the various sections and depots throughout the District. Each group was 'chaired' by LAC representatives, Mrs. Dilys Davies, Messrs. Gordon Barlow, Arthur Bunton and Alyn Griffiths.

Two-man teams of senior staff from Head Office and Gwynedd District moved from one group to another and stayed for periods of about twenty minutes each time to answer questions and accept constructive suggestions from the staff.

The teams were Messrs. John Scudamore (*Deputy Secretary*) and Jim Barraclough; Ken Leach (*Deputy Chief Accountant*) and Denis Hughes (*District*

Administrative Officer); Harry Foreman (*Assistant Chief Engineer—Civil*) and Russell Shaw (*District Engineer*); George Grady (*Principal Engineer—Installation and Service*) and Norman Maden (*District Commercial Engineer*).

Many meaningful discussions took place with some members of the staff in the small groups airing their views which in larger gatherings would probably never have been heard.

For a first-time effort, the scheme worked fairly well. On a few occasions, the group chairperson tended to allow individuals to 'take over!' At other times they did not seem to take into account the functions covered by their 'visitors' and had some problematic engineering or commercial questions put to accountancy and administrative staff and vice versa.

The change from a "set" speaker was excellent. "Refreshing" and "stimulating" were comments echoed by many staff members in the bar later.

Perhaps more work needs to be done in getting over to staff attending the Conference as to who's who when it comes to answering their questions and exactly what functions are covered by their Local Advisory Committee.

Yes, this style of Conference is definitely worth pursuing for at least another year, when it could meet with even greater success.

Our trio, below, are the last three members of the famous 'stern' gang, still on active service. From left to right, they are, Messrs. Morris Parry, Oliver Edwards and Ernest Owen.





From right to left in our picture we see Messrs. Arthur Bunton, Denis Hughes and Ken Leach with one of the groups.

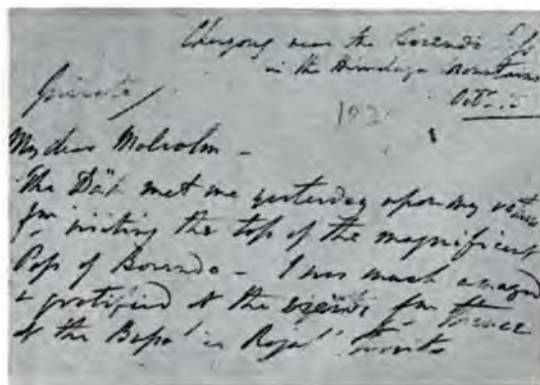


Mr. John Scudamore, second from left listens to a point made by one of the Gwynedd District staff. His 'partner' Mr. Jim Barraclough, was unfortunately 'out of shot.'



Messrs. George Grady and Norman Maden, second and third from left. Group Chairman Mr. Alyn Griffiths is on the extreme left, answer questions from their group.





WITHIN OUR BOUNDARY No. 2

"The Letter"

by

Derek Lang

(Financial Dept., Head Office)



In a previous article under this heading, I related how a casual concession to curiosity led me from a wooden schooner in Plymouth back to Deeside. Some time ago, I was again indulging my curiosity in a secondhand bookshop when I came across an

old letter which I knew would direct my researches towards India but, I had no idea that yet again I would end up so close to home. I had even less indication that it would answer a question which I had thought about but had never really bothered to solve since I first visited Chester.

The letter itself was without a cover and was not particularly attractive except for the fact that the address contained the words "... in the Himalaya Mountains." This zone being within the compass of my historical and philatelic interests caused me to examine the letter further and upon finding mention of the arrival of the "Dak," which signified the mail or 'Postal Runner' I transacted a deal for the purchase of the letter.

Upon closer study I found that the letter was addressed to The Honourable Sir J. Malcolm Bt., GCB, but at this stage the name had no immediate significance and the name of the writer was not legible beyond the fact that it appeared to start with the letter 'C' and end with letter 'E.' Eventually I managed to decipher most of the letter which reads thus:

*Ch...ng near the Borindo Pass
in the Himalaya Mountains*

Private

Octr—15

My dear Malcolm—

The Dak met me yesterday upon my return from visiting the top of the magnificent Pass of Borindo—I was much amazed and gratified at the views from thence of the Bussahire Rajahs' Territory in the valley of the Sutlij—and the chain of lofty mountains which divide these regions from Chinese Tartary—I will let the C. Offr. of the Buffs know that your Son has my permission to go where ever you wish to send him.

Things are in a sad state at home but I am confident the Duke will set all right again if it is possible for any man to do it.

It is so cold I can not write any more at present—pray send me a copy of yr. Minute for Lord W.B. is very close.

Yrs. ever my dr. Malcolm

Most truly

C.....e

The Honble,

Sir J. Malcolm, Bt.

G.C.B. ... ?

I shall be at Hansi 10th Novr. Delhi 20th. Meerut 26th. Mooradsbad 4th Decr. Bareilly 10th or 12th. Futtyghur 20th. Gwallior Jan —, Keitah, Rewah and Mirzapore 14, Feby Dacca about the middle of March.

It is evident that the writer was someone of considerable importance which, apart from increasing my curiosity, increased my chances of identifying the writer.

The addressee is almost certainly Sir John Malcolm, GCB (1769—1833) who was commissioned in the East India Company's army at the age of 13 and who, in 1827, became the Governor of Bombay. The 'minute' to which the writer of the letter refers is probably that written by Sir John on the subject of reform who, as your history books will tell you, was a staunch follower of the lead given by Sir Thomas Munro.

Quite obviously we are dealing with big names, historically speaking, within this little letter and so there is little doubt in my mind that the reference to "Lord W.B." is no less than Lord William Bentinck (1774—1839), Governor General of India from 1828 to 1835. Neither is there much doubt that the "Duke" is the Duke of Wellington who, in 1828 when this letter appears to have been written, had just become the Prime Minister. As the details of my little letter unfolded, I felt myself somehow privileged to have in my hands a contemporary opinion of those who had hitherto been mere names in my history lessons. The word 'close' in connection with Lord Bentinck indicates closeness of character rather than physical nearness and the "Iron Duke" was obviously a popular choice as Prime Minister with the writer; although his gloom and despondency regarding the future seems much as we have it today except that we have no Duke!

Having progressed this far I was soon able to establish the name of the author of the letter, for the only name which seemed to fit the facts and the signature was Combermere. The name was, as it should have been, vaguely familiar—how many hours had I spent in looking at that very name whilst traffic bound in Chester on my way home during the last ten years or so!

Have you ever wondered who the equestrian statue outside Chester Castle commemorates? It is in fact Sir Stapleton Cotton, Viscount Combermere (1773—1865), sometime referred to as "*The Cheshire Hero*" and who was sufficiently popular for the sum of £6,000 for the erection of the statue to be raised by public subscription in a very short time.

Cheshire born, Viscount Combermere was first educated at Audlem Grammar School and, following training at a military school, he became a second lieutenant in the 23rd Royal Welsh Fusiliers in 1790. As his statue indicates, he served in many campaigns but he was also notable for his civil capabilities which were apparent during his Governorship of Barbados (1817—1820) and later as Governor General of India where the Great Mogul named him



Riding high in Chester—Viscount Combermere.

"*Champion of the State*" and "*Sword of the Emperor*."

Viscount Combermere became Constable of the Tower of London in 1852 and a Field Marshal in 1855 and it is said that, had he not been reluctant to push his claims, he would probably have attained even higher office. He died on 21 February 1865 and was buried in the county of his birth at Wrenbury. His grave is a simple one for a man of such high eminence and esteem and should you visit Wrenbury Church, which is more than worthwhile in its own right, you could have difficulty in locating it in its inconspicuous position behind the Church Tower. Within the Church there are plaques in memory of earlier members of the Cotton family, some of whom were buried within the Church itself.

For those interested, a full account of his career is to be found in Vol. III (1882) of the *History of Cheshire* by G. Ormerod.

We shall be pleased to hear from anyone who has information on any monument, building or unusual place of interest in the MANWEB area. Please drop a line to *The Editor*, 'Contact' MANWEB Head Office, Sealand Road, Chester



Councillor Sefton tells a big gathering of Liverpool District colleagues that MANWEB's record is one of which they can be proud.

Manweb is Efficient

Councillor Bill Sefton

"THERE are not many organisations in this country with the efficiency record of MANWEB. When one considers what has been achieved in the organisation of the electricity supply industry, we are considering something of which the British people can be proud. Is there one country in the world with a record of efficiency like ours? I doubt it!"

This forthright testimonial to our record came from Board member Councillor Bill Sefton, veteran Liverpool politician and currently leader of the Labour group on Merseyside County Council.

The occasion was the annual employees' meeting for the staff of our Liverpool District, when he was guest speaker.

The theme of Councillor Sefton's talk was "*The Re-organisation of Local Government*"—a subject on which he was not so happy. "I would not complain about the re-organisation of Local Government if I was convinced that the use of public resources was handled as well as it is in MANWEB," he commented.

After discussing some of the problems which had been created by re-organisation, Councillor Sefton

A section of the audience at Dovedale Towers.





Another group of Liverpool colleagues.

urged his listeners to take every opportunity to participate in the governmental process.

"Over 200 years ago the United Kingdom framed a unique governmental process which is the envy of the world. Any member of our community is free to get involved in the act of Government. There is no limit to the power ordinary men and women can wield if they wish to," he declared.

The big attendance at the conference—which was held at Dovedale Towers, Wavertree—included a strong contingent of pensioners, together with guests from North Wirral and North Mersey Districts, and Head Office. They were welcomed by

Group Manager Mr. Sid Fairclough, who occupied the chair for the evening.

Presenting his account of the year's work LAC secretary Mr. Norman Mitchell appealed for more volunteers to train as qualified first-aiders.

Board Chairman Mr. Denis Dodds made a special point of thanking all those members of the District staff who had put in a lot of extra work coping with the administration of the industry's Code of Practice, together with the Government's discount scheme which had helped considerable numbers of needy people.

Obituary

We deeply regret to report the untimely death of Mrs. Isabel Lindsay, aged 26, of Head Office Computer Programming section in a mountain accident

Isabel, an experienced mountaineer, and her husband John, were members of the Ogwen Mountain Rescue Team. On November 27th they were walking with their dog on the ice-covered hills above the Ogwen valley in Snowdonia when she slipped and sustained fatal injuries.

We extend our sincere sympathy to her husband in his sad loss.

Another premature death we regret to record is of Mr. Frank Williams at the age of 56. He was a clerical assistant in the Accounts section at Sealand Road and was a long-serving member of the Head Office Local Advisory and works Committees.

Frank was also the Branch secretary of his union, M.A.T.S.A. He served on his local Council and was on the Board of Governors for a school for the mentally handicapped.

Our sympathies go to his wife Margaret and to Frank's family.

Arabia—Bound

After 26 years with MANWEB, Mr John Heaton, senior production engineer at our Liverpool District, has left us to take up a post in Saudi Arabia.

Mr Heaton began his working life as a scientific assistant with the Admiralty, served as a petty officer in the Royal Navy, and joined MANWEB as a graduate trainee in 1951. A succession of engineering posts followed, and after re-organisation he moved to Liverpool as Production Engineer.

On behalf of his many friends he was presented with a carriage clock by Mr. Charles Donovan (*District Engineer*).



"That was Hark the Herald Angels Sing—and now comes the commercial break!"

Cartoons
by Ernest Silcock,
painter, now retired
from our
Runcorn Depot

When the door was opened . . .



A gleaming new electric cooker was delivered to a lady living on Anglesey. After unloading and fitting it into her kitchen, our lads were asked to take away the old cooker. They obliged. As they drove away, the lady realised that she had left a fruit pie in the old oven. She called Holyhead offices and explained. Our man there nipped into the yard to check the returned cooker. He opened the oven door to find an empty dish!

The pie must have smelled good and tasted even better!!!

(Cartoon by Geoff Baker)



