

CONTACT

January
1974



THE GIRL FROM
Manweb
1974

Message
to the Staff
from
The Chairman



FUEL EMERGENCY

The shortage of coal supplies to power stations precipitated the three-day electrical week. This shortage has been compounded, in addition, by a further shortage in deliveries of oil to oil-fired power stations.

By the time this message appears in *'Contact,'* the general situation may appear to have eased a little. The Government have just announced that full supplies of electricity are to be restored to the steel industry and have indicated that a four-day electrical week may soon be possible.

Nevertheless, although the mild weather and the three-day electrical week have helped to reduce the drain on coal stocks, deliveries of coal to the power stations are considerably less than normal and the situation cannot be brought into balance until the miners return to full-time working. Notwithstanding the relaxations now proposed, we are not yet out of the wood. Restraint in the use of electricity is still essential if we are to survive the winter without further restrictions. This danger can only be removed by an early end to the miners' action.

I should like to express my appreciation of the work done by staff throughout the organisation in responding to this situation. Both our Head Office and District Offices have dealt with a deluge of enquiries from consumers about the impact of the Government Orders upon them and, at the same time, we have had to accept our own share of restrictions, particularly in heating and lighting. The response in both respects has been most commendable and indicates the resilience and fortitude which all our people can show in the face of a genuine emergency.

Denis Jones.



CONTACT

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January 1974

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Editorial Staff

Keith Baldwin
John F. Perry
Sam Dougherty

EDITORIAL

A Testing Time

PEACE, someone once said, is indivisible. In a complex modern society, an energy crisis merits the same description. There can scarcely be a single aspect of working, social or domestic life in Britain which has not felt the cold breath of the fuel shortage which is making this our most unpleasant winter since the dark days of war.

Through the medium of our own supply networks the inadequacy of those vital forms of basic energy which provide our heat, light, motive power and essential services has made itself universally apparent. Darkened streets and silent workshops, gloomy shops and early-closing TV, disconnection rotas and emergency Orders, have brought the gravity of the situation home to everyone.

Inevitably this dismal situation has imposed stress and strain on many different sections of the MANWEB staff. Our engineers have pored over their network plans to produce workable rotas to meet changing circumstances. Commercial personnel both at head office and Districts have been hard put to it to cope with endless streams of inquiries from consumers of all classes, struggling to adjust themselves to a new half-paralysed world. At times the phones in our press office have been almost too hot to handle as newspapers and broadcasting stations raced to keep pace with the changing situation. Telephone operators and shop staffs did their best to keep cool under considerable pressure from the public.

And just to make sure that our colleagues in the rural areas didn't get too bored, Mother Nature herself piled on the agony with hurricane-force winds which played ducks and drakes with the overhead network, especially in Anglesey. That, at least, we suppose, could be regarded as a normal hazard!

At the time of writing, the shape of things to come is unclear. The only safe bet seems to be that our problems are not yet over. Up to now, as the Chairman says, we have reason to feel satisfied with the way in which our industry is meeting yet another severe test of its capacity to cope with a crisis.

The 'Girl from Manweb 1974'



The judges with their final choice. From left to right: Mr. D. G. Gwyn (Deputy Chairman), Mrs. Diana Pulson (Women's Page Editor, Liverpool Daily Post), Lesley, Mrs. Doreen Tysall (Principal, Patricia Platt Model Agency, Liverpool) and Mr. M. R. Cowan (Chief Commercial Officer).



Pat Reed, centre right, our "Girl for '73" hands over to her successor, Lesley, while completing the picture we have runner-up Elizabeth Griffiths, a clerical assistant at Caernarvon, left, and Rosemary Gill, a clerk in Wayleaves Section at Head Office, right, who took third place.



The remaining finalists from the 30-odd girls who entered the competition. From left to right, Jeanette Allport, a clerk in Creditors Section at Head Office, Helen Cronin, a clerk at Lister Drive in Liverpool, Lynne Worrall, a clerk at our Queensferry Stores, Lynne Astle, a clerk at Macon Way, Crewe and Sheila Weigh, an accounts clerk at Head Office.

OUR COVER PICTURE shows our "Girl from MANWEB—1974" Mrs. Lesley Taylor, a 26-year-old energy sales demonstrator in our Clwyd District.



Guest speaker with Head Office visitors and District Officers. From left to right, Messrs. T. P. Shell, K. Helliwell, E. Jones, T. Mervyn Jones, A. Kidd and A. P. Whyte.

Successful get-together in Dee Valley District

“WELCOME TO WALES” was a most appropriate theme for a talk given by guest speaker Mr. T. Mervyn Jones, Chairman of the Welsh Tourist Board at our Dee Valley District Employees’ Meeting held at the British Legion Club in Llay a few weeks ago.

The evening got off to a good start with a turkey dinner enjoyed by members of the District staff, their guests and 40 retired colleagues.

The business side of the meeting was conducted by Mr. K. Helliwell (*Group Manager*) who officially welcomed Mr. Jones and visitors from Head Office, Messrs. A. P. Whyte (*Chief Accountant*), D. Holman (*Commercial Economist*) and A. Kidd (*Assistant Secretary—Personnel*). He then called on Mr. Eifion Jones (*principal assistant—Admin.*) in his capacity as Secretary to the No. 4 Local Advisory Committee to present his Report.

He said that some members of the District staff still seemed a little confused over what their Local Advisory Committee did. He explained its powers in dealing with matters concerning safety, health and welfare together with many other matters of mutual interest to the Board and its staff. “At the meetings,” he went on, “there are no ‘sides’ but just a group of people discussing points without any bias.”

A happy trio, from left to right, Messrs. J. A. Winchester, E. T. Peters and D. Holman.



He then praised the work done by the safety sub-committee making special mention of the display units arranged in the foyer of the Club. He said that the Committee had examined a number of accident reports and endeavoured to make sure that the same kind of accident did not occur again. In saying that everyone should be his own safety officer he appealed to members of the staff who had any suggestions on how accidents could be avoided at work, to come forward and let the Committee hear about them.

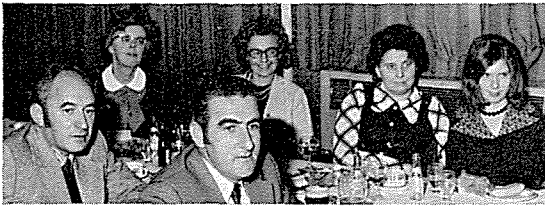
Mr. Jones then spoke of the LAC’s responsibility for assessing ideas put forward in the Suggestions Scheme and commented that during the year a number of new posters had been displayed and suggestion boxes re-sited and as a result, twelve suggestions had been submitted by members of the staff and some had received cash awards.

He voiced the disappointment felt by the Committee on the lack of response by the staff to go for places at one of the Spring or Summer Schools.

In bringing his remarks to a close, Mr. Jones said, “As far as your Local Advisory Committee is concerned, if we have left undone what should have been done or if we have done what should have been left undone—then you are the judges of our work. If we have done something, then this must surely prove that your Committee is working.”

Mr. Helliwell then thanked all the members of the Committee for their contributions in helping to iron out some of the problems arising from time to time in the District.

He then went on to quote some statistics thrown up by the Board’s Annual Report. He said that even though we had lost money, in many ways it had been a very successful year for MANWEB. Sales of electricity had increased, with industry making a good recovery giving us grounds for cautious optimism. On the domestic front with sales increased by 9.7 per cent, this was the largest increase



during the past ten years with the average home using 4,459 units—at an uneconomic price.

Appliance sales were 18 per cent up on last year and despite super-store and cut-price competition, a record figure of £7.73 million had been achieved. Installation and contracting turnover had increased by 20.7 per cent to £3.29 million—a record figure.

He brought his remarks to a close by congratulating all concerned for helping to keep our losses down to reasonable proportions. He said that this was the third year running that we had lost money and obviously we could not continue like this, even though we had a few pounds in the kitty, we could not go broke. "Our external costs have risen sharply," he commented, "and we have been allowed only a modest price increase as from January 1st, 1974." We could expect to lose money again this year because Government restrictions had been prevented from increasing our prices to an economic level.

Jones "Bed and Breakfast"

Mr. Helliwell then introduced guest speaker Mr. Jones to his audience, who began by informing them that he had been the first Chairman for the Wales Gas Board and had served in that capacity for 22 years. He had moved to his new post with the Welsh Tourist Board in 1970. "Once known as 'Jones the Gas'" he said, "now I am 'Jones, Bed and Breakfast'".

He commented on his pleasure at seeing and hearing industrial democracy working in a practical way at the meeting and congratulated the District on their excellent turnout.

Mr. Jones then went on to interest his listeners by talking of the architectural heritage of this country and how European peoples were keenly interested in this, so much so that the Council of Europe had decided that in 1975, European Architectural Year should start here in Great Britain. He said that our castles, cathedrals, villages and the unique traditional Welsh farm houses and cottages would be of tremendous interest to the many visitors we could expect.

He spoke of Wales as being the cradle of the industrial revolution and that in parts it was also the grave when one saw the many relics which had been left to be preserved in this day and age.



However by a little effort and imagination interest could be revived and visitors attracted to the places where arts and crafts of yesteryear could still be seen. He cited the example of a 100-year-old slate quarry which had been reinstated and between Easter and November 1972, well over 100,000 people had been to look it over. He said that if anyone could find a living use for any historical building, then its future was assured.

Tourist attractions

These were attractions for the international tourists to this country, he went on, pointing out that in the United Kingdom last year we earned £551 million from tourists—ten per cent of our invisible exports. High on the list for our visitors were castles, places of historical interest and gardens. He that planned floodlighting of some of our old buildings helped enhance their beauty.

He went on to say that with the increase in the number of high rise flats and office blocks, the steel and concrete jungles of London, Washington and Tokyo looked exactly the same as any other of the world's large cities. "The value of our heritage gets greater and greater," he continued, "and is appreciated more and more. Tourism proves this."

Mr. Jones then talked of how the Welsh Tourist Board set out to welcome American visitors, and their plans for 1976—the bicentenary of the American Declaration of Independence. He said that there was quite a good link between Wales and America for of the 56 men who signed the Declaration, 18 came from Wales!

He went on to suggest that in 1976 large organisations like MANWEB might invite members of comparable organisations in the United States to come over to Wales . . . which many of our American cousins felt was the land of their forefathers.

"We have a great heritage and we should treasure it for our children," he concluded.

After an enthusiastic audience had shown their appreciation for the fine talk delivered by Mr. Jones, an Open Forum session was held with some interesting questions answered by Messrs. Helliwell, E. T. Peters (*District Engineer*), J. A. Winchester (*District Commercial Engineer*), T. P. Shell (*District Administrative Officer*) and visitors from Head Office.





◁
From left to right
Messrs. R. I.
Jowett, T. Myl-
roi, and T. D.
Hamilton



▷
Mr. H. Telfer.

No. 2 L.A.C.
EMPLOYEES MEETING

**Merseyside
Rapid
Transport
System**

— Guest Speaker

Chairman Mr. D. G. Dodds, *left*, talks with shop steward Mr. R. Hanson.



SHOULD 'Contact' produce a gourmet's guide to the Employees Meetings, top of the list would be Liverpool District. On the cold December night Butler's Catering Services produced an excellent meal, good food, hot and plentiful with first class service.

Over 300 staff crowded into Dovedale Towers in Liverpool's Penny Lane, and amongst them were a fair sprinkling of retired employees.

Chairman of the proceedings was Mr. H. Telfer (*Group Manager*). He welcomed delegates to the meeting and introduced the No. 2 L.A.C. secretary, Mr. N. Mitchell, who presented the report of the Committee's work.

The guest speaker was Mr. T. Mylroi, the Project Manager of British Rail. His very topical talk was entitled "Improvements to the Railway System on Merseyside."

Merseyside was in the forefront of rapid transport systems and a considerable amount of work had already been completed under the city.

Early in the 1960's a steering committee had been formed to look at the transport problem on Merseyside. A report had been commissioned and work was today being carried out as a result of the findings of that report.

One of the major portions of the report suggested a loop line under the city. Much of the tunnelling has been done and a great deal of use had been made of existing tunnels. New stations were being built and eventually it was hoped to link up many existing lines to produce an electrified network under the city second only to the London Tube.

On behalf of the L.A.C. and delegates Mr. H. O. Evans thanked Mr. Mylroi for his interesting and topical talk.

Before introducing the open forum Mr. Telfer asked the Board Chairman, Mr. D. G. Dodds, to say a few words.

Questions in the open forum were concerned with a variety of subjects which included a suggestion for a trade counter at Lister Drive, improving the roadways and car-park at the District Office.



***Just some of the delegates who
attended the Liverpool Meeting***



AWARDS TO STUDENTS

Our Chairman, Mr. D. G. Dodds and Deputy Chairman, Mr. D. G. Gwyn, joined student engineers, past and present, at a special lunch at Head Office a short time ago. The occasion was the annual presentation of Study Prize Awards and Completion Certificates.

Mr. Dodds said that there was a bright future for all in our industry and Mr. Gwyn encouraged the young men to gain as much experience as possible in both engineering and commercial fields in the early stages of their careers.



△ SENIOR STUDY PRIZE AWARDS

Mr. J. L. W. Ladner (*Education and Training Officer*) left, congratulates award winners Messrs. J. Hampson, right and Mr. J. A. Walker. Both are now 3rd assistant engineers with the Board.

◁ JUNIOR STUDY PRIZE AWARDS

Mr. Oscar Lloyd (*Admin. Assistant, E. & T.*), left, with students who received awards, from left to right, Messrs. S. R. Griffin, D. A. Winter, A. W. Timmins, F. S. Winter and A. T. Fox.



◁ CERTIFICATES

Completion Certificates were presented to, from left to right, Messrs. J. C. Macdonald, L. Hill, A. Littler, G. A. Thomson, D. Edge, J. Welsh, and H. B. Owen.

Can you play Badminton?

We are in need of players, especially ladies, to help us win the trophy once again in the Supply Industry Championships to take place in Salford in April.

If you can play at all, please drop a line to *The Editor, 'Contact', MANWEB Head Office, Sealand Rd. Chester. NOW!*

CUPID BUSY AT ABERYSTWYTH

Maybe Spring comes especially early to the shores of Cardigan Bay . . . whatever the reason, wedding bells have been ringing madly in our Aberystwyth District, and we offer congratulations and best wishes for future happiness to:

Miss Christine Jones (clerk) and Mr. George Flewin (electrician), both members of our staff at Machynlleth, married recently at St. Peter's Church, Machynlleth. From their many friends they received a gift of cash to choose their own memento.

* * *

Mr. Len Edwards, linesman at

Machynlleth, and Miss Sarah Ann Davies, of Taunton, married recently at Taunton. Len's gift from his friends was a cutlery set.

* * *

Miss Glenda Williams, clerk at Aberystwyth, and Mr. Emlyn Jones, married recently at St. Hilary's Church, Llanilar. From her friends Glenda received a food-mixer.

* * *

Miss Hilary Man, clerk at Aberystwyth, and Mr. Paul Evans, married at Aberystwyth. Hilary was presented with a fireside rug—and a carpet sweeper to keep it clean!



DEE VALLEY DISTRICT DINNER DANCE



We work together and we can play together.
Just one of the many seasonal social functions held
throughout the Board's area recently.

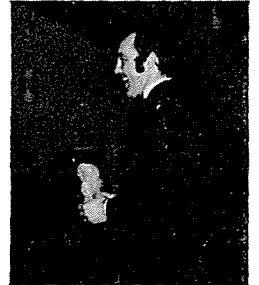
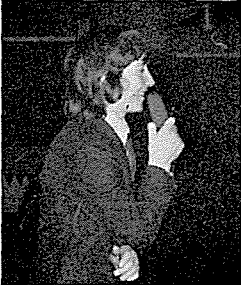


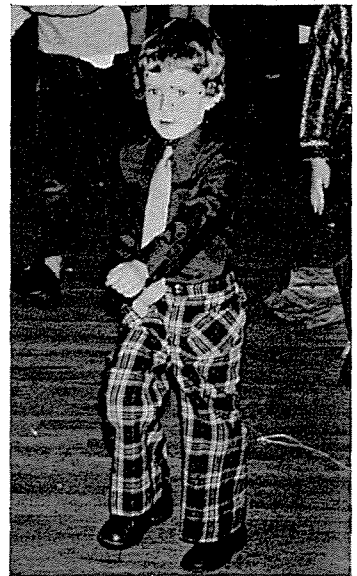
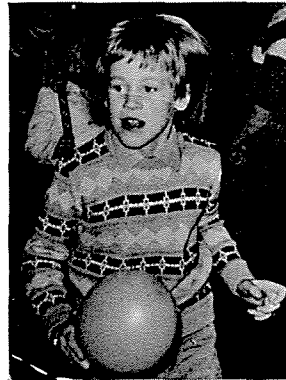
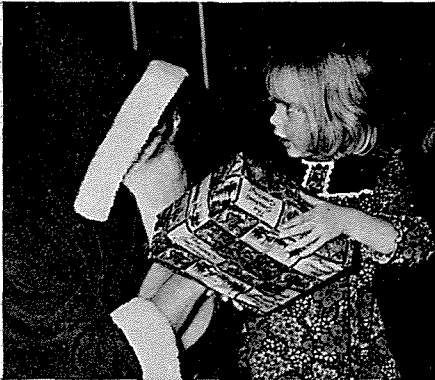
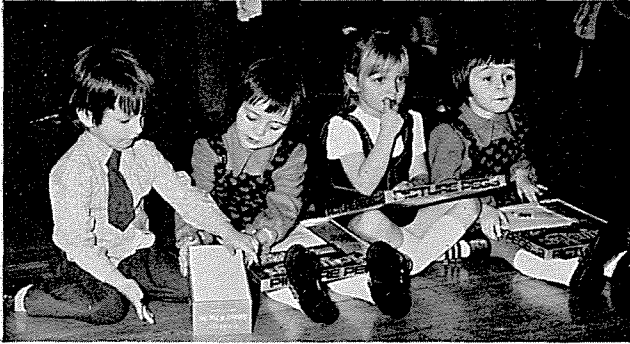


PARTY- TIME

Pictures on this page:
Head Office Staff Party

Opposite page:
Head Office Children's
Party







Feeding time for the youngsters with pop, gooey cakes and jelly.

Party for North Wirral Children

The North Wirral District Sports and Social Club organised a successful party for the children of members just before Christmas with and 80 youngsters between the ages four to nine attended. After a fine talent competition with prizes awarded by Mr. Ron Morley (*District Engineer*) further entertainment

was provided by Uncle Doug, (*from Head Office Energy Sales*) who captured all with his magic. After tea, prepared by the ladies of North Wirral canteen staff, came games and then the arrival of the ever-popular Santa.



ONE OF THE MANY PARTIES FOR CHILDREN HELD IN THE MANWEB DISTRICTS.

Left: The man they have all been patiently waiting for
. Santa himself.

Below: All ages and all sizes take the stage in the talent competition.





Left to right: Messrs. N. Hawke, D. G. Dodds M. M. Parker, Mrs. Hawke and Messrs. D. G. Scott and A. Anderson.

No. 11 L.A.C. EMPLOYEES' MEETING

Test Cricketer — Guest Speaker

THE ANNUAL meeting for staff employed at Head Office was organised by the No. 11 L.A.C., and held in the Sealand Road restaurant. Mr. Garry Warburton and his staff produced an excellent meal for the 300 or so delegates.

Board Secretary and Solicitor, Mr. M. M. Parker the chairman of the meeting, gave a brief resume of the year's work of the L.A.C., and before introducing MANWEB Chairman, Mr. D. G. Dodds, appealed to members of the staff to support the E.E.I.B.A. Benevolent Fund.

With the State of Emergency only a few days old, Mr. Dodds expressed his intense dislike for the need to introduce the disconnection rota, which had just been published. However it was the only way in the prevailing circumstances by which demand could be reduced fairly.

Looking to the future of the electricity industry, we must maximise the use of the cheapest fuel, he told delegates, and considered it desirable to increase the proportion of nuclear power and oil-fired stations, despite the present oil situation. It took five years to build a power station and by then North Sea oil would be available.

Concluding on a bright note the Chairman referred to the first twenty-five years of MANWEB operations which had just been completed. They had been years of great expansion and achievement, and he thanked staff for their efforts in this and previous years.

The guest speaker was the Australian Test cricketer Mr. Neil Hawke. He related some of his experiences on and off the field of play with a special mention for the famous Yorkshireman Freddy Trueman.

Yorkshire was partly responsible for him remaining in this country and not returning 'down

under.' He had married a lass from that county, and the attractive Mrs. Hawke had come along to the meeting with him. He now played for Nelson in the Lancashire Cricket League.

Following Mr. Hawke, Mr. Parker introduced the open forum which had a mammoth post bag, there were over forty written questions. The evening ended to the strains of disco style music with the Commercial Department's own 'DJ' Mr. Norman Kenyon and his 'Sealand Sound.'

Just a few of the Head Office delegates.



OSWESTRY DISTRICT EMPLOYEES' CONFERENCE

A night of mixed emotions



All smiles at Oswestry. From left to right: Mr. R. A. Williams, Mrs. Pat Reed, Messrs. M. R. Cowan, D. I. Cruttenden and J. W. Trimble.

THIS YEAR'S Oswestry District Employees' Meeting, held a few weeks ago at a local hotel, was a night of enjoyment, after a good meal—of satisfaction on hearing a report on our work achieved during the year—of near tears as we heard a touching account of work being done at the local orthopaedic hospital—of elation as District records were announced with the cry "*We are the champions*"—and of joy as we listened to the beautiful voices of the Rhos Male Voice Choir.

With the meal over, Mr. J. W. Trimble (*Group Manager*) welcomed everyone to the meeting, saying how pleased he was to see so many ladies present. He also had a special welcome for the many retired members of the staff who had joined their colleagues once again. Special guests were, principal speaker Mr. D. I. Cruttenden (*Group Secretary to the Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital*), Mr. M. R. Cowan (*Chief Commercial Officer*), Mr. J. Fisher (*Deputy Chief Engineer*), Mr. K. S. Leach (*Deputy Chief Accountant*) and Pat Reed, our '*Girl from MANWEB*.'

Guests from Head Office with District Officers, from left to right: Messrs. G. E. Davies (*District Engineer*), K. S. Leach, W. J. Thompson (*District Administrative Officer*) and J. Fisher.



He then took a few moments to explain, in simple terms, the reasons why MANWEB had made a loss for the third successive year. Rising costs and restrictions on tariff increases were the principal causes with the most significant feature being the rise in the cost of fuel. In the last five years, coal costs had risen by 50 per cent and it looked as if oil costs were going to surpass this figure.

Committee Report

Then Mr. M. Beard (*principal assistant—Admin.*) as Secretary of the No. 9 Local Advisory Committee presented a brief verbal report to back up the printed report on the work carried out by the Committee during the year. He explained that the Safety Subcommittee had examined every one of the 172 accident reports recorded in the District and had taken steps to try and avoid a repetition of similar occurrences. They concluded that most of the accidents could have been avoided if staff had used more care in selecting the right tool for the job and following correct procedures.

On behalf of the Committee, Mr. Beard appealed for more people—male and female—to come forward for training as first-aiders.

He went on to say that many aspects of health and welfare had been considered by the LAC, most relating to the move into the new District Office and Depot. For members of the Manual Workers' Benevolent Society, financial assistance had been granted to two members and 24 Christmas parcels had been distributed.

The most significant contribution in the field of increased efficiency had been the move to Maesbury Road with its modern aids to engineering, office equipment and stores handling, quite apart from the obvious improvement in working conditions for the staff.

below
the
staff
their



g colleagues to take advantage of s offered by the Board for further Beard voiced the Committee's congratulations to Mr. J. A. Walker, a 3rd assistant engineer in the District, who, under the Board's training scheme, had gained a Bachelor of Engineering Degree with First Class Honours at Liverpool University.

In summing up, Mr. Beard said that judging by the absence of serious disputes, this had been a very successful year for staff in the Oswestry District. On a personal basis, he expressed his thanks to Mrs. Dot. Lorenzo and Mr. Hubert Gwilliam for their help and support.

Then guest speaker Mr. Don Cruttenden took the floor. He held his audience from the very first words of his talk entitled "*I'm Better Now Thank You.*" His touching account of the magnificent work carried out and the remarkable results achieved at the local orthopaedic hospital had his listeners at times on the brink of tears, only to brighten their eyes again with his timely sense of humour.

He talked of the people who went to the hospital for treatment and of the people from all over the world who visited the hospital to learn from their methods to fight crippling diseases. He said it was the largest specialised hospital of its kind in the world and contrary to popular belief it did not deal in magic or miracles but only on the intuition and

skill of the surgeons and staff.

Many stories of individuals and their fight for survival were recounted by Mr. Cruttenden.

In conclusion, he thanked the Oswestry District staff for their concern and for the help afforded with electricity supplies to the hospital, adding that he truly appreciated the difficulties we were experiencing at the moment, and as a final comment he offered all present the opportunity of giving further help with some voluntary work for the hospital patients. He said that it meant a lot to people who were ill to have people around them who were not ill. He said that the volunteers who came to help at the hospital were pearls beyond price.

Vote of Thanks

After proposing a vote of thanks to Mr. Cruttenden for his talk which left everyone thankful for their own good health, Mr. R. A. Williams (*District Commercial Engineer*) then went on to thank all members of the District staff for their help in putting Oswestry District on top in Contracting with the best results, not only in MANWEB, but in the whole country. He concluded with the well-known chant—"We are the Champions!"

With only one question asked in the Open Forum session—a smooth running District—a very successful evening ended with some fine singing from the Rhos Male Voice Choir.



CLWYD DISTRICT EMPLOYEES' ANNUAL MEETING

Three Guest



At the Clwyd Conference. From left to right: Mr. K. Pat Reed, Messrs. C. W. Leonard, K. Helliwell and

Speakers—entertain and inform

DESPITE strong competition from the TV coverage of the Miss World finals a few weeks ago, the Lido at Prestatyn was packed by members of our Clwyd District staff on the occasion of their annual meeting arranged by the No. 7 Local Advisory Committee.

Our own personality girl, Pat Reed, graced the proceedings and was joined by other guests from Head Office, Messrs. J. Fisher (*Deputy Chief Engineer*), C. W. Leonard (*Assistant Chief Accountant—Computer Section*), H. W. Hegarty (*Assistant Chief Accountant—Finance*) and D. Holman (*Commercial Economist*).

Other special guests were the many retired members who had come along, including a couple of former Liverpool area employees, both in their 76th year.

After welcoming everyone to the Meeting, Mr. K. Helliwell (*Group Manager*), as Chairman of the LAC, called upon their Secretary, Mr. Keith Griffiths, (*principal assistant—Admin.*) to present his report.

In a lively and interesting account he dealt with many of the varied items discussed by the Committee during the year under review. He said that the Safety Sub-committee had examined 108 accident reports and he emphasised that safety was everyone's responsibility, commenting that the situation would be ideal if accidents were reduced to such a stage that the sub-committee would be redundant!

Speaking of the Suggestion Scheme, Mr. Griffiths said that Clwyd District were 'top of the league' and he encouraged everyone to keep sending in their ideas—"There's money in it," he said.

He then spoke of the opportunities afforded to every member of the staff to attend at one of the

special courses arranged at the Spring and Summer Schools. "If you are not successful at gaining a place this time, keep applying," he advised.

As Mr. Griffiths brought his remarks to a close, Mr. Helliwell encouraged all the District staff to regularly look on the notice boards where they will find copies of the Minutes of the LAC meetings. He said that this was one sure way of getting to know what was going on in their District. He went on to thank all members of the LAC for the co-operative way in which they had worked together.

Then Pat Reed gave a most entertaining account of her year of office as "*The Girl from MANWEB*." She opened her remarks with a carefully rehearsed greeting in Welsh which was enthusiastically received by her audience. She went on to tell of how she had been persuaded to enter the competition when she attended her own staff conference in North Mersey District, and then of her nervous approach to the final round.

She spoke of the personalities she had met when attending functions for the Board and how she really enjoyed every minute of her year of office. She laced her remarks with a great deal of humour to the delight of her listeners.

Next on the agenda came Mr. Fisher who gave a very informative and enlightening talk outlining in some detail the intricate system of communications set up within the Board and of our plans for the future. Although he had the difficult task of translating some highly technical matter into layman's understanding, he succeeded with the help of some carefully prepared slides.

He said that the heart of our internal telephone system was the 1,000-line automatic exchange at Head Office through which something like 8,000

calls a day are made. The G.P.O. switchboard at Head Office was a five-position board with 40 incoming lines and the operators handled 4,000 calls a day, in and out.

Many more interesting facts and figures were given which we hope to publish as a special feature in a future issue of 'Contact.'

The final guest speaker, Mr. Leonard, gave a brief and interesting talk about the work going on in the computer field. He said that since MANWEB became 'computerised' about ten years ago, the machine had become more powerful as accounts had become more complicated. The computer had now become a consumer information system rather than just a billing machine.

He talked of the ease in feeding information in and the difficulty in getting information out, but of how gradually these problems were being solved.

"Recent technological innovations" he said, "have enabled us to replace the large and bulky tabulations usually not bang up-to-date by a small card about six inches by four inches containing microfilm images

of information relating to 1,000 consumers."

Another new process 'Microfiche' enabled individual records on the cards to be enlarged and projected on to visual display terminals (TV screens) in our District Offices.

Among the projects for the future was for our shops and District Offices to be able to pass information back directly into the computer. The ultimate goal, however, was to achieve within the Board, a genuine paperless society.

The meeting continued with an Open Forum with a number of questions on a variety of subjects answered by Mr. Helliwell and senior officers from Clwyd District, Messrs. L. Griffiths (*District Engineer*), D. R. Mellor (*District Commercial Engineer*), D. G. Cooksley (*District Administrative Officer*), with, on occasions, some good cross-floor discussions.

Mr. Helliwell thanked everyone for helping to make the Meeting a success by their participation and he suggested that they danced the rest of the evening away to the music of the "D J Sound."

Our "Girl from MANWEB" holds the interest of the audience.



NEW UNDERSTANDING— *Electricity Information Sheets*

THREE new information sheets about domestic appliances have been added to the **Understanding Electricity** educational information service sponsored by the Electricity Council.

"*About Food Freezers*" and "*Floor Cleaners and Polishers*" (Nos. 1 & 2) provide detailed information about the use and maintenance of appliances in general domestic use, and describe where they should be put in the home. They are well

illustrated and are written to appeal to an age range of 11 upwards.

Understanding Electricity provides a central source from which schools and colleges can obtain audio-visual and other teaching aids. Its aim is to improve the knowledge of young people about basic electrical principles and some of the practical applications of these associated with their daily lives.

The first **Understanding Elec-**

ts a series of
as; eight new
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to interest educationists; and details of films illustrating the utilisation of energy for agricultural, commercial, domestic and industrial purposes.

Copies of the **Understanding Electricity** catalogue and the new information sheets are available from Film Sales Dept., Guild Sound & Vision Ltd., Kingston Road, London SW19 3NR.

FARM ELECTRIC

ABOUT a hundred farmers and stock-breeders assembled at a Chester hotel a few weeks ago to take part in a conference on animal feed preparation and livestock feeding, organised by MANWEB, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, and the National Farmers' Union.

The conference aimed to consider methods of using electrical equipment to produce animal rations on the farm, with the object of reducing feed costs, and also the role electricity could play in helping farmers considering forming syndicates to run feed preparation plants to produce animal feedstuffs in bulk.

A comprehensive day's programme included talks on "Nutritional aspects of preparing feed on the farm," "Equipment for feed preparation on the farm," "My reasons for milling and mixing on the farm," "A syndicate for feed preparation," "An Automated Plant" (Mr. Ron Andrews of MANWEB Head Office), "Liquid feeding of dairy cows," and "Dry and wet feeding for pigs."

There were also two "Open Forum" sessions.



Conference Chairman
Mr. J. R. Willis



Left to right: Messrs. R. Stewart (Energy Sales Manager), P. Wakeford (Electricity Council), and R. Andrews.

FARM ELECTRIC

is the new name for the Electricity Supply Industry's wide range of agricultural services. Our own Agricultural specialist is Mr. Ron Andrews who is always pleased to help with problems in this field.



Left to right:
Messrs. D. Morgan (Min. of Ag.), W. N. Shires (Dep. Chief Comm. Officer), G. Amos (Min. of Ag.), R. T. Matson (farmer), and R. Ankers (Chairman of Cheshire Stock feeds Association and farmer)
Below: Some of the delegates.





In retirement, Mr. Baker relaxes comfortably at his home in Crosby.



Mr. Thorndyke, left, receives his farewell gift from Mr. Hodgetts.



At his desk prior to retirement, Mr. Comyn.

RETIREMENTS

Mr. A. BAKER

A lifetime of public service both in his working life and in his spare time lies behind the recent retirement of Mr. Arthur Baker, who carried on long after his 'normal' retirement date to smooth the run-down of the MANWEB accounts function at Derby House in Liverpool.

Mr. Baker began his career on the staff of the Liverpool Corporation Treasurer's department in 1930, and joined MANWEB's Area 1 accounts staff in 1948. He should have retired in 1968, but stayed on at Derby House, latterly looking after the cash side and the enquiry counter.

Outside working hours Mr. Baker has devoted a vast amount of time and energy to various essential causes. These include the Merseyside Hospitals Council, the United Voluntary Organisations and the National Savings movement. He has also held a number of key positions in the Liverpool and District Branch of NALGO. He has been secretary of the Bootle Conservative Party, and was for several years a member of Bootle Council, representing Netherton Ward.

At a gathering at Derby House, attended by many long-standing friends and colleagues, he was presented with parting gifts by Mr. George Shoemith (D.A.O., North Mersey).

Mr. HAROLD THORNDYKE

After 40 years' service to the industry, mostly spent in stores and material control work, Mr. Harold Thorndyke recently retired from our Mid-Cheshire District staff at Crewe.

Expressing good wishes for a happy retirement, Mr. D. Hodgetts, District Administrative Officer, presented him with a pair of field glasses.

Mr. R. H. COMYN

A gruff and tough exterior belied the true character of Mr. Robert H. Comyn, a man whose heart was in the right place, who retired from his post as Production Engineer in the Dee Valley District a few weeks ago.

Bob started his long career serving an electrical apprenticeship with a Chester firm, later travelling all over England and Wales on installation work. He joined the staff of Chester Corporation in 1930 and did a lot of work on the programme of D.C./A.C. changeover. He once worked as a shift engineer at Crane Street and served at the town's hydro station for a period.

After nationalisation he succeeded through various appointments to become 1st assistant District Engineer at Chester, and on the early retirement of his chief, Mr. H. U. Hayes, he was the acting District Engineer for about three years, before going on to the job he retired from.

A large gathering of his friends and colleagues went along to the Red Lion hotel at Hope to pay tribute to his service and friendship. Mr. Hayes was unable to attend but sent along a letter which conveyed his personal tribute to Mr. Comyn, saying that he was a modest man in whom one could always have confidence. He was loyal and ready to take responsibility at all times. Mr. Hayes wrote that he truly respected Bob's integrity, diligence and loyalty—qualities echoed by all present at the farewell.

In presenting him with a portable TV from his colleagues, Mr. E. T. Peters (*District Engineer*) said that Bob would be sadly missed by a great many people in the District and at Head Office. He was proud to have known and worked with him and

he concluded by wishing, on behalf of all his friends, good health and good luck to Bob and his wife in their retirement.

Miss D. FERN

Mr. Denis Dodds, Chairman of MANWEB, paid tribute to his secretary and personal assistant, Miss Dorothy Fern. The occasion was a private luncheon in her honour, to mark her retirement from MANWEB, just before the Christmas holidays.

It was in 1935 when Miss Fern started work as a shorthand typist in the Electricity Department of Southport Corporation. Eventually she became the secretary to the Engineer and Manager, Mr. W. T. Gann.

In 1952, Mr. M. M. Parker, Board Secretary and Solicitor, and then Deputy, brought Miss Fern to Head Office as his secretary. She followed this appointment as secretary to the former Chief Accountant, Mr. E. J. Lollar, and later Deputy Chairman at the time, Mr. J. Rankin.

It was in 1960 that Miss Fern began her long working partnership with Mr. Dodds. He was appointed Deputy Chairman on the first day of that year and when he became Chairman two years later Miss Fern continued as his secretary until her retirement.

As a keen gardener and a very proficient artist Miss Dorothy Fern will no doubt find her well earned retirement affording her more time to pursue her hobbies at her Ormskirk home more fully.

Mr. D. P. JONES

After 37 years' service to the industry Mr. D. P. ('Dai') Jones, a popular character on the Oswestry District staff, has retired.

Mr. Jones joined Caersws electricity supply undertaking in 1936 as an electrician, transferring to MANWEB on nationalisation and continuing to

serve as an electrician until 1963, when he moved to storekeeping duties.

Expressing best wishes from all his colleagues, and especially his close friends at Newtown, Mr. W. J. Thompson (District Administrative Officer), presented Dai with farewell gifts.

Mr. J. HUGHES

The good wishes of his friends at North Mersey District were extended to Mr. Jack Hughes, who retired recently from the post of chargehand overhead linesman.

Jack's retirement marked the end of 47 years' continuous service with the electricity supply industry, during which time he became well-known both to colleagues and to MANWEB consumers as a man of good manners, tact and ever-helpful disposition.

Mr. A. W. Hawley, District Engineer, in making a presentation to Jack, offered him and his wife every good wish for a long and happy retirement.

Mr. JACK MAXWELL

After 46 years' service to the electricity supply industry, Mr. Jack Maxwell, MANWEB's safety officer, retired recently.

Starting as an apprentice with Birkenhead Corporation, Mr. Maxwell progressed through the posts of electrical fitter and junior engineer to various grades of assistant engineer, being appointed a section engineer in the North Wirral District on the nationalisation of the industry. He became safety officer in 1966.

Making a farewell presentation at head office, Mr. G. Haughan (assistant chief engineer—operations) made light-hearted reference to Jack's interest in the Roman army, adding that his motto

Miss Fern, holding bouquet, surrounded by Head Office secretaries.





Mr. Maxwell, centre left, says his goodbyes to Mr. Haughan.

was always “*Secundum safety Regulam.*” This, said Mr. Haughan, might be very freely translated as “*According to the Safety Rules.*”

An interesting document which Mr. Maxwell produced referred to his early days as an apprentice, when he was paid nine shillings for a 47-hour week. This princely sum escalated to ten bob in his second year, with another shilling ‘merit money’ later added for passing his exams!

At a second presentation, at Hoylake Training Centre, Jack was presented with a set of record tokens.

His hobbies include interest in history (particularly military history), classical music, and railways.

Mr. J. JONES

Mr. John Jones, a member of the Planning Dept. staff at Head Office, retired recently.

He commenced work in 1928 as an apprentice electrician with the Mid-Cheshire Electricity Supply Company, and afterwards held positions as mains

assistant on overhead and underground mains, and on drawing office and construction work. On amalgamation with the Mersey Power Company, he was appointed chief draughtsman.

On nationalisation he moved into Area 2 in the Drawing Office at Sandiway House, later moving into the Planning section and remaining in Planning when the move to Chester took place.

He was presented with a digital clock and photographic equipment by his colleagues.

His hobbies are photography, wine making, reading, and walking, and he is a “do-it-yourself” enthusiast.

Mr. E. E. WOODFINE

Mr. E. E. Woodfine, District Records Draughtsman in the Liverpool District, retired at the end of December after nearly 47 years in the industry.

“Woody,” as he was known to his colleagues, started his career with Liverpool Corporation Electricity Supply Department in 1927.

For his parting gift, Mr. Woodfine chose several 8-track stereo cartridges and an umbrella.

This huge group of engineers say their farewells to Mr. Jones, front row, wearing glasses.



Mr. J. GILBERT

Mr. James Gilbert, a driver at Crewe, was presented with a stainless steel tea service on behalf of his friends when he retired recently after 40 years' service.

The presentation was made by Mr. G. Zeiher, District Engineer.

Mr. E. TRAVERSE

Best wishes for a happy retirement from his colleagues to Mr. Edward Traverse, of South Lancs District office, Warrington.

Mr. W. HAYES

A wrist watch, an eiderdown and a sum of money were farewell gifts presented to Mr. Walter Hayes from his friends and colleagues on the occasion of his retirement from work on January 12th.

We join them in wishing Walter, a labourer with the South Lancashire District engineering section based at Weston Point, Runcorn, many years of happy retirement.

A.G.M. for Liverpool Retired Employees

The clubhouse at Thingwall Road Liverpool was packed to capacity earlier this month when over 70 retired members of the staff living in Liverpool and the surrounding area, turned up for their Annual General Meeting.

Chairman Mr. Harry Turner opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and then talked a little of the progress made by the Committee during the past year. He hoped that more retired employees in the Liverpool area would come along and join their colleagues in the group, as plans were in hand to keep everyone happy.

Then Secretary, Mr. Harry Robertson, read the Minutes of the last Meeting and went on to further detail aims and plans for the future. He said that the Club were grateful for the cash grant of £75 received from the Board and said that the money would be put to good use.

An atmosphere of good humour prevailed throughout the meeting. We hope to be able to publish photographs in the next issue of 'Contact.'

Obituary

Mr. R. H. OWEN

A lifetime inseparably linked both with the development of the electricity supply industry in the mountain fastnesses or Caernarfonshire, and with the welfare of the people who live there, came to an untimely end a few weeks ago with the death of Alderman Robert Hugh Owen.

"R.H.", as he was affectionately known to a host of friends and workmates, sprang from the slate-quarrying community at Llanberis, and worked at the Dinorwic quarry before joining the MANWEB staff as a labourer. He quickly qualified as a linesman, and later as a high-tension linesman, engaged in constructing and maintaining the blizzard-swept overhead networks in the most rugged part of the MANWEB area.

In parallel with his working life as a MANWEB employee,

he gave a lifetime of service to the people of Wales in general, and his native county in particular. His public positions were too numerous to detail—among them more than 25 years' service as a member of Caernarfonshire County Council, of which he was a former Chairman. At the time of his death he was vice-Chairman of the new Gwynedd County Council.

A member of the Joint Advisory Committee of the Snowdonia National Park, and a J.P., his involvement also included the Regional Hospital Board, his local rural council, his trades union, the Economic Council for Wales, and many other facets of national and local community life.

"*Fluent, fearless and shrewd . . . deeply moved by the plight of the underdog. . .*"—these were the words used by a *Daily Post* columnist in writing his obituary.

At his funeral, attended by something like 500 people, an officiating clergyman described 'R.H.' as "*a prince of the people.*"

After tributes such as these, it would be presumptuous for us to try to add to them, except perhaps to note that he was awarded the British Empire Medal in 1960 for his services to our industry.

The deepest sympathy of all his MANWEB colleagues is extended to Mrs. Owen. Her personal loss is felt in lesser measure by many others who have lost a leader and a friend.

Mr. W. R. PREECE

Former garage foreman for 20 years at New Crane Street, Chester before his retirement in 1969, Mr. William R. Preece, passed away at his home in Lytham St. Annes recently.

We offer our condolences to his widow.