



# CONTACT

July 1976

Board Members at  
Hoylake Training Centre  
(see page 139)

# BOARD MEMBERS MEET STAFF AT HOYLAKE



Board member Mr. Tom Jones, right, looks in on engineering foremen in the 'Line School'. From left to right: Messrs. Will Hughes (Clwyd), Ted Jones (North Wirral) and Arthur Dearden (North Mersey).

Board members held their June monthly meeting at our Hoylake Training Centre. Before settling down to the business of the meeting, Members toured the various sections at the Centre and met instructors and staff.

**OUR COVER PICTURE** shows Board member Mr. M. J. Moore, (Chairman, Consultative Council), right, chatting with Mr. Mike Joyce (jointer, North Mersey) who was on a refresher course.



Councillor W. H. Sefton looks on as jointing instructor Roy Holden demonstrates jointing techniques.

Mr. Derek Povall, a 4th year apprentice on an advanced electrical course chats with Board members, from left to right: Messrs. John G. Parkes, Tom Jones, M. M. Parker and M. J. Moore.



Apprentice electrician Stephen Sweeney working his lathe watched by Mr. John G. Parkes.



In the advanced installation section at Hoylake Training Centre we see, from left to right: Messrs. J. L. W. Ladner (Education and Training Officer), D. Morley-Smith and M. J. Moore (Board members), John Seymour (sen. elec. instructor), M. M. Parker (Secretary and Solicitor and Board member), John G. Parkes (Board member), Denis Dodds (Chairman), Tom Jones (Board member) and Ben Hastings (Deputy Chairman).





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## Editorial

### *Changing Patterns*

**O**FTEN enough, in many ways, the social, industrial and economic progress of nations can be measured and interpreted by the histories of their electricity industries. In every developed or developing country the steadily-rising growth of electricity consumption tells its own story, while setbacks and crises of various kinds are often marked by tell-tale dips or plateaux in the consumption graphs. A case in point is Britain's current economic situation, reflected in many areas by a fall-off in the demand for electricity.

Many MANWEB people will find interest in the story of the ups and downs of the electricity industry in one small corner of our area—the slate-quarrying town of Blaenau Ffestiniog (recorded elsewhere in this number of *Contact*). As slate-quarrying, and the community which depended on it, grew into a major industry, so the pioneers of electricity supply kept pace and served the needs of industry and people alike. The growth of a small Welsh “boom town,” and its decline and change as the demand for slate diminished, were matched by both the distribution and generation sides of the electricity industry.

It is encouraging that the ruins left by the slate industry at Blaenau are being put to creative and constructive use—not in the same spectacular way, perhaps, as those at Dinorwic, but nevertheless in a way which is likely to give interest and pleasure to many thousands of people, adding yet another facet to the tourist attractions of Wales.

#### Editorial Staff

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

# A last farewell to Oakeley Quarry

Story by  
**David P. Booth**  
(System Management)



Just over twenty years later, in 1928, a third substation was built on the Oakeley Quarry site, again making use of the ever-handly slate. This sub-station—No. 3—was much larger than the others and was supplied at 33 kV from the newly-operational power station at Maentwrog.

In the compound of the substation were three single-phase 33/10-kV transformers, each rated at 833½ kVA and each having its own hand-operated tap changer.

The transformers were controlled by a 33-kV oil circuit breaker housed in the substation building. A 10-kV distribution panel had two feeders supplying Oakeley Quarry, one feeder to the neighbouring Llechwedd and Maenofferen quarries and another feeder acting as a 'back-up' supply from the Cwm Dyli power station via Line One.

Being a 33-kV substation, Oakeley Quarry No. 3 was manned. The attendants, in addition to their normal duties, also patrolled and maintained the five overhead lines emanating from the substation.

We still have a handful of men working for the Board who started their careers in the industry as substation attendants-cum-linesmen at Oakeley Quarry. To name but a few, we have James A. Jeffrey from Blaenau, Jack Beech and Aaron Eynyon from Pwllheli, John Hughes now at Rhuddlan, David Jones, David H. Roberts, Aneurin Ellis and Glanfor Williams, all at Caernarfon.

One of the original team working at No. 3 was the late Robert Williams, still remembered as something of a legend in the area. Known as Bob Poliau (*Bob of the poles*), stories of his dedication to the job and of carrying out repairs to overhead lines in very rough and desolate areas are often remembered and related.

WITH the advent of slate mining, over 200 years ago, in the mountains of Merioneth—now Gwynedd County—the town of Blaenau Ffestiniog emerged as it nestled amid the towering black mountains.

As the slate industry grew, reaching its peak about 1890, so did the town and consequently the demand for electricity became greater. Over a period of time, three substations, situated in an area called Oakeley Quarry, were commissioned to meet the increasing load.

The first two substations—built out of slate from nearby quarries—were completed about seventy years ago. Electricity supply was fed in from the Cwm Dyli power station via a 10-kV overhead line.

*This was the first overhead line to be erected in North Wales—appropriately called Line One.*

Built nearly half-a-century ago, Oakeley Quarry 33-kV substation now stands empty with the first overhead line in North Wales—Line One—running alongside.





Some of the Caernarfon Administrative staff who received their safe driving awards. Also in the picture are Messrs. R. W. Parry (P.A. Admin.), left, F. Hannath (District Admin. Officer), 2nd left, L. C. Jones (P.A. Cons. Accounts), 3rd left, and G. L. Davies (material controller), right.

## GWYNEDD DISTRICT SAFE DRIVERS

At ceremonies held at the various depots in our Gwynedd District, staff who qualified were presented with their Safe Driving Awards by Messrs. Ariel M. Thomas (*Production Engineer*), Fred Hannath (*District Administrative Officer*) and T. J. H. D. Jones (*Installation Engineer*).

**Corresponding Bar to 15-Year Brooch:** Messrs. William J. Hunt and William T. Jones (*Caernarfon*), John M. Owen (*Llangefni*), John S. Jones and Robert E. Owen (*Pwllheli*).

**Oak Leaf Bar to Ten-Year Medal:** Messrs. Oliver Edwards, William H. Morris, Eric Phillips, John G. Roberts and Hugh I. Williams (*Caernarfon*), William Owen (*Llangefni*).

**Ten-Year Medal:** Mr. Robert D. Jones (*Bleanau*).

**Bar to Five-Year Medal:** Messrs. Thomas W. Jones (*Caernarfon*), Frederick J. Keen Jnr and Llewelyn Roberts (*Llangefni*), Arthur Jones (retired) and Hedd W. Roberts (*Pwllheli*).

**Five-Year Medal:** Messrs. John Hughes (*Caernarfon*) and Gwylfa Parry (*Llangefni*).

**Diploma:** Messrs. John E. Dewhurst (*Bangor*), Hugh Davies, Oliver Davies, John M. Humphreys,

Benjamin Jones, Morris Jones, Thomas J. Roberts, Dewi P. Williams and Robert O. Williams (*Bleanau*); Thomas Bee, Brian V. Davies, Delwyn Hughes, Alfred M. Jones, Ernest Jones, Francis Jones, Griffith W. Jones, Gwilym Jones, John C. Jones, John H. Jones, Richard L. Jones, William J. Jones, Griffith R. Orritt, Cyril Owen, Edward Owen, Ernest Owen, Richard M. Owen, Rolant T. Owen, William E. Owen, Morris Parry, Alwyn Pritchard, David H. Roberts, Eric Roberts, William D. Roberts, Alfred A. Sage, Terence H. Varney and Idwal O. Williams (*Caernarfon*); David E. Jones, James S. Jones, John M. Jones, John R. C. Jones, Mathew O. Jones, Frederick J. Keen Snr., James J. Madine, Percy Morris, John H. Owen, John K. Owen, Thomas J. Owen, Alun P. Roberts, Cyril Roberts, Thomas A. Roberts, Thomas H. Roberts, Gordon G. Steffen, John L. Williams, Richard W. Williams and Thomas Williams (*Llangefni*); Maurice R. Cotgrove, Dafydd W. Griffiths, Owen I. Roberts, John Tudor and W. Watkinson Jones (*Pwllheli*).

**Exemption Certificates:** Messrs. Ieuan M. Hughes, James A. Jeffery, David G. Jones, Glyn Jones and Iorwerth Roberts (*Bleanau*), Garry Davies, Allen D. Graham, Cledwyn Hughes, John I. Hughes, Richard D. Jones and Thomas I. Price (*Caernarfon*); Richard H. Hughes, Idwal James, Ivor W. Thomas and Arthur L. Williams (*Llangefni*); Hugh Roberts (*Pwllheli*).

## ON THE CASH

by **GEORGE WELLS** (*Supervisor Garston shop*)

It's only just ten-thirty

Accounts are thick and fast,  
The wheezing till keeps crashing  
As though each bill's the last.

The petty moans of paying  
Assail our weary ears.

The puny old excuses  
Engendered down the years.

We see our elder brethren

Paying with a smile,  
The young ones pay by Giro  
Achieved with youthful guile.

Then the gallant band of  
Those who pay by parts.

The excuses that they offer  
Just break our tender hearts.

The constant chore of counting,

The selling of the stamps,  
The day that only ends  
When night has set her lamps.

You sort of live a lifetime  
In one day on the cash,  
Wishing that the bosses  
Would come and have a bash!

And then that magic moment  
When MANWEB shuts its door  
The cash is done and safe  
With good old Securicor.



The original No. 1 Transformer Station . . .



. . . now transformed into a souvenir shop.

The Old . . . and the New



Mr. Wil E. Roberts, left, Quarry Director in charge of Tourism, with Mr. John Roberts (foreman) on one of the slate mountains.

Meals being prepared for visitors in the all-electric kitchen.



Mr. Hugh Parry Thomas, splitting and dressing slate.

Once the Quarry Stores, this spotlessly clean new restaurant still has its roof supported by the original timbers—scarred by fire some years ago.



### WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

We would be interested to hear from anyone else who once worked at Oakeley Quarry No. 3 substation—pensioners especially.

Being a substation attendant at Oakeley Quarry No. 3 had moments of excitement to compensate for the loneliness and solitude of the normal shift. Like the incident when a 33-kV circuit breaker exploded and the man on duty made a miraculous escape by diving through a window to safety. His only injury was a slightly cut hand!

The slate mining industry in the area began to decline as alternative cheaper, mass-produced materials flooded the market. The first two substations on the site were stripped and vacated.

Then, in October 1962, the transformers and 33-kV equipment were removed from No. 3 substation. The 10-kV panel was uprated to 11 kV to standardise with the new 33/11-kV substation established in the town of Blaenau Ffestiniog. The panel was also reduced to three feeders, one Oakeley Quarry feeder being removed.

After this last ditch stand, Oakeley Quarry No. 3 has now been made redundant. A short time ago, her 11-kV switchgear was removed and the 11-kV overhead line—including Line One—was diverted. The proud old slate building, holding many great memories for the 'electric men' is now standing quite empty for the first time in nearly 50 years.

But not for long because like its two companion substations it will be utilised by the Ffestiniog Mountain Tourist Centre. They have already made a wonderful job of converting the former No. 1 substation into a beautiful crafts shop.

It may seem to be a sad end of such historic buildings but they are still serving a most useful purpose for the benefit of the community.

*The author wishes to thank those members of the Gwynedd District staff who provided information for this story.*

### GLODDFA GANOL FFESTINIOG MOUNTAIN TOURIST CENTRE

Over 1,000 feet up in the Welsh hills, on the A470 Blaenau to Betws-y-Coed road, is an exciting new attraction. On the site of "the world's largest slate mine", the Mountain Tourist Centre combines adventure, thrills, history, fascinating information and breathtaking views in a totally new form of holiday entertainment.

In a day that's different among the mountains of slate one can see massive machinery of bygone years brought back to life—craftsmen splitting a slate to one thirty-second of an inch . . . you can try this for yourself.

Panoramic walks and a look down the Quarry hole, 350 feet deep!

A museum and gallery and a play area for the youngsters.

And, if you feel peckish, there is an excellent restaurant—originally the old quarry stores—with the food cooked by electricity! The Centre is open daily until October from 10 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.

### Some of our Blaenau Ffestiniog Staff



Mrs. Mary Roberts who cleans the place and makes 'cuppas'.



Above: from left to right: Messrs. Bryn Williams, John M. Humphreys, Jeffrey Thomas, Ieuan M. Hughes and R. O. Williams.

Right: From left to right: Messrs. John R. Owen, James A. Jeffrey, Glyn Jones, Idris Roberts, David G. Jones, Hugh Davies and John Williams.



# The Highest Paid Electrician in Britain

by R. Gordon Ward



**Snowdon Meeting.** From left to right: Messrs. R. Gordon Ward, Clifford Williams (Assistant Manager, Snowdon Mountain Railway Company) and 'top' electrician, Gordon Steffan.

THE march of time has brought about so many changes in Snowdonia. Take, for instance, the sobering truth that one can count the surviving members of the 'Stern Gang' on one hand.

Their line patrol paths have disappeared, indeed the lines they diligently maintained have been torn down in places to allow for progress. Personally, I am always sceptical when I hear the word!

However, not many readers care for sentimental stuff these days, so let us move on to the present day.

I could not let the opportunity pass without drawing attention to what happened here in Snowdonia.

The Snowdon Mountain Railway has been running since 1896. In those days of course, candles and paraffin lamps were the enemies of darkness, especially so on the summit of the mountain.

Then in the thirties came the

decision to erect a permanent building and instal generators.

But let's face it, there always have been good electricians and bad electricians. That building has been subjected to the abilities and disabilities of both!

'Cowboys', as they are often called, are still rampant all over the country today. The Snowdon Mountain Railway Company realised that they had a choice and in their wisdom they decided on MANWEB in the sure knowledge that our electricians were fully trained men under the supervision of skilled engineers, using only the best and latest materials.

Young Gordon Steffan, one of our electricians, must have had quite a 'shock' when he first observed the maze on arrival at the summit. Cable upon cable, broken 'spurs' left by the cowboys, plug sockets as brown as tobacco plug. I think the picture is clear to all in the trade!

Undaunted, this young man from MANWEB calmly took it all in his stride and tackled what seemed an impossible task in record time.

The Snowdon Mountain Railway Company can now sleep quietly and peacefully knowing that electrically speaking, 'there will be peace in our time'.

So, whenever you see a light

shining from the 3,560 feet high peak of Snowdon, there should be pride in your heart when you remember that it is there because of the work done by a young man from MANWEB—the 'highest' paid electrician in Britain!

Unless of course there's juice on at the top of Ben Nevis!!

## COURSE FISHING

Considerable interest has been expressed in the possibility of a National Electricity Course Fishing Championship.

In response to this, the East Midlands Anglers are proposing to hold such a match on the Trent in October.

Entries will be restricted to one team of twelve from each area board, and should be organised through the Area Council for Sport and Recreation.

It is suggested that the winning Area should organise the championship match for the following year.

Interested parties should in the first instance contact Mr. L. A. B. Saul, Nottingham Grid Control Centre, Green Lane, Clifton, Nottingham or Mr. B. Newton, E.M.E.B. Craft Training Centre, Lambourne Drive, Wollaton, Nottingham.

How about it you course fishermen of MANWEB? There could be yet another prize for us!

### THE AUTHOR

Our good friend, and former 'Contact' Correspondent, R. G. Ward, was a linesman based at Victoria Hotel yard in Llanberis for many years prior to his retirement. During the very busy days of the North Wales Development programme, he always kept us supplied with interesting news stories concerning the work in hand together with anecdotes of his colleagues.



# Talking Notes

## LIVERPOOL B.E.M.

**C**ONGRATULATIONS to **Mr. Charles William Davies**, a chargehand labourer with our Liverpool District, who was awarded the British Empire Medal (Civil) in the recent Honours List.

Mr. Davies joined MANWEB in May, 1954, and for many years has been an active member of the Local Advisory and Works Committees. He is senior shop steward representing members of the EETU-PTU, and is a member of the Manual Workers' Benevolent Committee.

Outside his working life with MANWEB Mr. Davies has been widely involved in public service of various kinds. He is a former Chairman of Halewood Parish Council, has served as governor of various local schools, is advisor to a voluntary committee connected with Alder Hey Hospital, Liverpool, and was a member of Knowsley District Council until this year's elections, when he was unlucky enough to lose his seat by only six votes.

Other interests include the Halewood Junior Football League. His home is in Barncroft Road, Halewood.

### Return Home

A Caernarfon man recently returned to his native city as boss in the office where he started his working life as a clerk.

The man concerned is **Mr. Dennis Hughes**, a 31-year-old qualified accountant who has

just taken up his appointment as Gwynedd District Administrative Officer.

After leaving the Sir Hugh Owen Grammar School, Dennis went to work as a clerk at the Board's Caernarfon offices in St. Helens Road. After moves to our Wrexham, Chester and Birkenhead offices, he now returns to Caernarfon to manage the administrative and accountancy functions in the District.

A Welsh speaker, Dennis and his wife Beryl have a six-year-

old son, Karl.

Away from work, Dennis enjoys chess, golf, philately and 'do-it-yourself.'

At Gwynedd District office he succeeds **Mr. Fred Hannath** who retired at the end of June after 26 years with the Board.

### For Sale

Davies 'Diplomat' tubeless tyre 590 x 14 New. £7.50 o.n.o. Birdcage stand £1. 'Phone: 051-489 9613.

Six-year-old semi. Mynydd Ilsa. Through lounge/dining room, 24 feet, fitted kitchen, half-tiled bathroom, full gas central heating, excellent decorative order, gardens front and rear. 'Phone: Mold 55718.

### Leaves Crewe Grid

After 28 years in the electricity industry **Mr. Ted Davies**, a switchboard attendant at Crewe Grid substation has left the Board to take up a new career in the management of a pet shop in Nantwich.

Mr. Davies joined the North Wales Power Company in April 1948 and worked successively as linesman's mate, linesman and switchboard attendant. A member of the LAC and Works Committee up to the time of leaving, Ted was a very popular colleague. Many of his work-mates will miss his helpful voice on the radio during times of emergency on the distribution system.

Colleagues gathered together to wish him farewell, and 'good



D.A.O. at Gwynedd, Mr. Dennis Hughes.



# Head Office 'Knock Barn Dance

THE WET and windy contestants or spectators annual competition. *W Modos*, a team of *Commoners*, the energetic Doug Grey minute mainly from Geoff Green. The prize for *Reptiles*' with *Quasi* and



shar was two do A alre 500 dan bar Gu V Gre H up joy





# ockout' and

and windy weather did not deter the  
 s or spectators, and the Head Office  
 petition. Winners were 'Quasi and the  
 m of Commercial lads and lasses, led by  
 Doug Gregg. In second place were 'The  
 a team scratched together at the last  
 y from accounts staff, and skipped by  
 The prize for the best mascot went to 'The  
 'Quasi and the Modos' and 'Moneybags'  
 sharing second place. First prize  
 was 24 cans of lager, and second,  
 two bottles of champagne, donated  
 by James Edwards Ltd.

As if enough energy had not  
 already been expended the 450—  
 500 spectators and contestants  
 danced the night away with a  
 barn dance to the music of Bob  
 Guy and the Hoedowners.

With the event being organised  
 Gren Roberts and the games by  
 Hugh Farrow, they could chalk  
 up another successful and en-  
 joyable evening.



# MID - MERSEY TEAM WIN CATERING CONTRACT



Managing Director for C.C. Spice U.K. Limited, Mr. A. D. Leader, left, chats with Mr. Ken Appleton.

## ***Designed and Installed by MANWEB***

**T**HE first factory canteen installation created by Mid-Mersey District's Catering Design Service is now in full operation at CC Spice UK Limited on the Astmoor Industrial Estate at Runcorn.

The firm, who import, mill and market all kinds of peppers, spices and herbs in bulk and market retail packs under the 'Lion' brand name, have had a packaging plant on this site for the past three years. Their main offices and production plant were based in London, but two years ago the Company decided to move all its trading and manufacturing operations to the Runcorn site.

Dining facilities for all the staff came high on their priority list, especially with the anticipated

increase in the number of employees. Their existing canteen catered for 40 meals a day utilising an Electroway Speedfryer, a Microwave Menu-master, two domestic type hotplates, a double hotcupboard, over-sink heater and a small wash boiler, used for making teas.

Obviously a new and much larger kitchen and dining area would have to be provided and this fact soon came to the attention of our Board.

Joan Dittrich, our Commercial Catering engineer, and Ken Appleton, Mid-Mersey's energy sales engineer met a CC Spice Company Director on site with their consultant, Mr. R. H. Church, to discuss their needs in catering equipment.

Lunchtime for CC Spice staff in their new dining room.



Having got the information, MANWEB's Catering Design Service team in Mid-Mersey District started work on the design of their first factory canteen. They planned a complete kitchen from food preparation—cooking and serving—to the final clearing-up facilities.

The Board faced tough competition from other kitchen planning firms but Ken managed to persuade Spice's top men to visit one of our Commercial Catering exhibitions. Here they saw for themselves the actual equipment they would be using and were impressed by our ability to plan and design electrical industrial kitchens.

Ken was then invited to the next CC Spice Management Meeting to answer further questions on costs and installation dates. Things went so well at this meeting that in order to meet the deadlines requested by the Company Ken was prompted to ask for an order to our specifications—and he got one on the spot!

Former office space in the original building was utilised for the catering arrangements. A new warehouse, mill and office block have since been added. The canteen, now in full use, caters for over 150 members of the staff. All the food is prepared, cooked and served from a super-clean, white-tiled, all-electric kitchen. On either side of the kitchen area are dining rooms for the staff, senior management and the Directors.

Managing Director for CC Spice UK Limited, Mr. A. D. Leader said, "We have been impressed by the service and attention we received from MANWEB, and more to the point, the kitchen is functioning very well indeed!"

Equipment in this most modern kitchen includes a radiant top range and grill, solid boiling top, convection oven and deep fryer—all from the Creda 'Top Choice' range; a Hobart dishwasher and waste disposal unit; a Whitewolf 50-gallon water heater; a Jackson water boiler and a Bartlett steaming oven. The service counter and Bain Marie were specially made by a local firm. The total catering load is around 80 kilowatts.

Chef Mr. Hung Ng, who comes from Hong Kong, is delighted with all the electrical aids. "The ovens are first class," he commented. "The temperature control is absolutely perfect."



Mr. Frank Kelly (senior sales representative) at the all-electric cooking range with chef Mr. Hung Ng.

Energy sales demonstrator Sue Orrell, right, helps out at the serving hatch during the lunchtime rush.



# Russian Winter

By Jean and Graham Zeiher

*(Graham is our Mid-Cheshire District Engineer)*

WE ARRIVED at Heathrow Airport on a bright sunny day feeling much overdressed, our warm woolly underwear and thick sheepskins anticipating the deep snows of the Russian winter. Aeroflot's TU 114 jet with its strange alphabet seemed a magic carpet to an unknown and alien land.

'Russian air stewardesses,' we had been told, 'have stout legs and peasant faces,' but the girl who served our first snack in tempting little boxes proved unquestionably pretty. The interesting boxes, in which we had hoped to find our first experience of strange and exotic foods, revealed anaemic triangles of British Airways sandwiches. Our latent hunger promptly died, to be revived only by a Danish dinner

collected at a brief halt in Copenhagen.

After a time leap of three hours our plane touched down at Leningrad Airport. As we stepped onto Russian snow a shiver of excitement ran visibly through the fifteen English visitors, or perhaps it was just a reaction to eight degrees of frost!

Leningrad is the interesting result of two phases of town planning. The old city, built for Peter the Great in the eighteenth century by an Italian architect, is a spacious town of wide streets and beautifully proportioned buildings forming a harmonious entity. This is surrounded by the modern city risen from the holocaust of destruction caused by the German bombardment and siege of 1941/3. This too has wide thoroughfares and green spaces from which rise the inevitable tower blocks, each group of which has its own school, nursery and shops.

In two hectic days we dashed frenetically about classical Leningrad from our gorgeous Victorian hotel suite, where a golden girl twined round a clock and perched on a tall plinth, winked at us in bed!

The baroque facade of the Tzar's winter palace, on the bank of the River Neva, with its pale green walls and white cornices, houses one of the finest art galleries and museums of Europe, with over forty thousand paintings and innumerable fascinating reminders of its past magnificence. Through its

**This picture of the Kremlin Wall as seen from Red Square in Moscow was taken by the Zeiher's during their Russian holiday.**





Another Zeiher picture, reproduced from a colour slide, shows a section of the Space Pavilion Exhibition of Economic Achievements.

great oak doors charged the 1917 revolutionaries after a signal shot had been fired from the battleship *Aurora*, now a museum, moored on the far bank of the river.

We caught a glimpse of the Yussopov palace where Rasputin was poisoned and the Peter and Paul fortress, standing on an island in the Neva, guarding both a prison and the cathedral with its gleaming golden spire, where all the Tzars are buried.

**A mammoth which blundered to its frozen death in a bog ten thousand years ago and was preserved by the perma-frost, is proudly displayed in the zoological museum, still crouching in his last position, displaying his great tusks and woolly back. Leningrad is so full of treasures that we all vowed as our time ran out, to return and explore at leisure.**

We flew to Moscow over miles of flat land, the whiteness broken only by the dark shadows of pine forests. Our first breath of Muscovite air seared our nostrils and pierced an icy passage into our lungs. It was really cold! However, a caviare welcome awaited us at our hotel opposite the Bolshoi theatre.

#### Red Square

Pinching ourselves to prove reality, we walked into Red Square, that cobble-stoned centre of the Communist world, dominated by Lenin's mausoleum of red granite. Unfortunately Lenin himself could not

be seen as he was undergoing "restoration" work after half a century of preservation. Behind the tomb is the Kremlin wall, red and crenellated, containing the ashes of Russia's modern heroes, each behind a small gold lettered plaque. At the head of the square rise the domes of St. Basil's cathedral; blue and white red and white, green and white, they swirl into the sky like a fairy tale fantasy. Under floodlighting the building seemed more like a desert mirage than a thing of reality. The guards round the Lenin Tomb too, took on an air of pageantry as they changed every hour on the hour with mechanical goose-stepping precision.

One side of the Square is edged by GUM the famous state department store. GUM is enormous and shoddy, like a covered market with individual stalls. One must queue to inspect and choose goods, queue again at the cash desk to pay and queue a third time to collect one's purchase. Great fun for us but tedious for those buying necessities.

It is difficult to equate the projected image of the Kremlin, that seat of awesome and dynamic Communist power, with the utter charm of its flag-stoned courtyard and three golden domed cathedrals. All have magnificent interiors to match their external beauty, being decorated with murals and the statuesque dignity of many icons. The Armoury, wherein are housed Russia's most precious treasures,

is a fine purpose-built museum, displaying awe-inspiring jewels, fifteenth and sixteenth century sword hilts and scabbards thickly encrusted with rubies and sapphires, gold bibles clasped with diamonds and encrusted with pearls, Fabergé eggs of exquisite craftsmanship, even ostrich eggs carved into goblets. Harmonising with mediaeval splendour is the fine modern Hall of Congress, where we saw the Bolshoi Company dance 'Don Quixote,' with both delicate charm and robust humour.

At the other end of the cultural scale was our visit to the circus, now in a new purpose-built theatre. A technically excellent performance explored all the possibilities from a cossack troupe performing wild acrobatics and juggling with swords on wild galloping horses to a roof high docking of Soyuz and Apollo with "astronauts" suspended dangerously below carrying out a second symbolic link by trapeze.

The exhibition of Economic Achievements, housed in a series of vast and well designed buildings is an astonishing creation. We were given a short propaganda lecture on Russian statistics and achievements and then whisked into the space pavilion, which exhibited the full range of space machinery, from Sputnik and a model of poor little 'Laika' in her capsule, to the latest Soyuz which docked with the Americans and which we were able to climb inside and found quite roomy! All very impressive, but perhaps the result of a certain lack of national self-confidence.

*Moscow's underground railway is efficient and cheap. Five kopeks—about three pence—takes one anywhere, stopping at well maintained mosaic and statue decorated stations which demonstrate a higher artistic standard than their London counterparts! Daringly we boarded a train, descended at the next station, had no idea where we were, and with cowardly speed retreated from whence we came!*

Both Moscow's seven million and Leningrad's three million inhabitants seemed well clad and fur hatted against the winter cold. The streets are thronged by orderly crowds who march in neat rows along the pavements. There are few private cars, but plentiful public transport. Moscow is reputed to have eleven thousand taxis.

There was much less snow than we had anticipated. Efficient conveyor belts with gobbling arms gather up great heaps to be whisked away. Roadside

and public garden roses are protected by wooden boxes and shrubs are tied up in sacking. Even they are protected by the all enveloping arms of the state.

Chewing gum is a product of the wicked western world much in demand in Russia. We were stopped frequently by children and young men demanding 'Gum' and expressing utter disbelief that we weren't laden with quantities of the nasty stuff!

All hotels, theatres and museums have free cloak-rooms where one must leave one's coat. This is a fine system which breaks down with great speed when the whole audience of a theatre converge on their coats as the curtain falls, an exercise needing both muscle and patience! Courtesy is a virtue noticeably lacking in all Russian activities. It is no use standing politely by, or holding a door for another person, one is merely swept aside by a purposeful and 'equal' tide of humanity!

Foreign newspapers are available but the earnest seeker after light on the Western scene has only *Morning Star*, *L'Humanite*, *Unita*, and similar products of the left, to glean for information. *Pravda* and *Isvestia* are, of course, ubiquitous and can be read free from notice boards in the streets and pop out of vending machines in the Metro stations.

Our homeward journey was started after an early breakfast and farewell walk round Red Square. The usual airport preliminaries were enlivened by the mystery of one person's coat which rang the alarm bell of the airport metal detector even when emptied of every object. At last the bus carried us out to the plane. We all prepared to climb out. "No" barked an official voice. The door was shut and we were off again.

"Heavens above," murmured a pathetic whisper, "we're off to Siberia!" However, after a short hiatus, we got airborne and were served a late 'breakfast' of caviare and chicken. Reading in an English newspaper hastily snatched at Copenhagen, that caviare was retailing at £3 per ounce, we felt duly appreciative of our last Russian meal.

We arrived at Heathrow in a typical Spring deluge, glad to observe that Britain seemed to have coped satisfactorily despite the falling value of the pound whilst we had been away! What a fascinating holiday it had been! How much more attractive England looked than it had done only a week before!

Where should we go next time? How about Samarkand and the Black Sea?

#### "CONTACT" PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION 1976

Open to all MANWEB employees, pensioners and their families.

Copy of rules and details of prizes from: The Editor, "Contact,"  
MANWEB Head Office, Sealand Road, Chester CH1 4LR.

Closing Date — 1st October 1976

#### Wallworks' Wanderings

In next month's issue of 'Contact,' we will continue with the Wallworks' story of their trip through Afghanistan.





Former 'Girl from MANWEB' Lynette Gibson (nee Kemp) with her audience of Young Wives at Llanddulas.



The audience's view of Lynette at work.

## GOING TO OUR CUSTOMERS



Above: Menna Roberts (Dee Valley District) ready to pop a dish under the grill during a demonstration for members of the Offa Group of the Women's Institute. Below: Arthur Thompson (sales representative) and Eirlys Hughes (Gwynedd District demonstrator), explaining and selling domestic appliances to some of the Llanddulas Young Wives.



On this page we picture just two of the many 'outside' demonstrations held throughout the Board every year. These shows—often put on in the evenings—are given to groups of people associated with local organisations such as the Women's Institutes, P.T.A.'s., Young Wives and the Electrical Association for Women, etc. etc. Through the demonstrations, our customers can see at first hand just how easy it is to cook—and bake—by electricity. Often, a variety of other electrical appliances are included, many of these being aids to the housewife with her chores around the home. Going to our customers in this fashion is good public relations and often produces some excellent sales results.

# Instant Service to Sewage Clinches Contract

By Mike James (*Circuit News*)

**P**PROMISES of unrivalled service that MANWEB made to help win a major maintenance contract some time ago at the newly expanded Five Fords Sewage Treatment and Disposal Plant in Wrexham are being expertly fulfilled.

MANWEB's advanced communication system, with VHF radios in Board vans ensuring 24 hour service, played a large part in gaining the contract, which is providing work for an electrician three days a week throughout the year.

The Welsh National Water Development Authority was anxious that an efficient communication

Not the choicest of places for a picture—above a swirling mass of sewage being aerated—we see Messrs. John Iball, a former Man from MANWEB, and our own Doug Barnes.



Maintenance electricians John Blything, left, and Chris Roberts on duty at Five Fords.

system should, as far as possible, be guaranteed. With sophisticated machinery at the plant—indeed it is one of the most technically advanced sewage plants in Wales—instant service is often required when problems occur.

Yet Five Fords, part of the Dee and Clwyd Sewage Division under Mr. James Davies, Divisional Manager, is only one of approximately 150 sewage works and pumping stations within a 1,900 square mile area covering all of our Clwyd and Dee Valley and parts of North Wirral and Oswestry Districts, controlled by the W.N.W.D.A. so obviously instant service is often difficult to supply.

The Water Authority however decided that MANWEB could offer the most reliable service so gave the Board the task of maintaining all their works and pumping stations. They have had no course to be regretful.

Said Mr. John Iball, electrical engineer of the Dee and Clwyd Sewage Division: "The service from MANWEB has been first class. We had a great problem with communication but MANWEB have overcome it, providing a 24 hour service even to remote areas."

Despite the fact that the Water Authority's domain 'trespasses' into four MANWEB districts, the Board has been able to liaise with the Authority to give one central telephone number for alarm.

The 'phone calls constitute three classes. A class "A" call means that an electrician is required at a sewage works immediately. Class "B" means assistance is required within hours

and a class "C" alarm requests help by the end of the day. To date MANWEB has answered all demands.

By coincidence, an example of MANWEB's maintenance service was provided when "Circuit News" visited Five Fords Sewage Works with Doug Barnes, assistant installation engineer at Dee Valley.

In the heat treatment plant, which operates on a continuous process, the filter presses had failed to operate. If the fault in the presses was not corrected immediately there would have been a gradual pile up of sewage in the treated sludge tank and when this tank became full the excess untreated sewage would have to have been stored in local lagoons.

As he was on the premises Doug immediately inspected the presses and found that a photoelectric cell on a protective device was dirty and hence inoperative. He cleaned it and the machinery resumed work as normal.

One of the reasons that the maintenance work is running so smoothly is that electricians Brian Bennion, John Blything, Chris Roberts and Peter Stewart, share the work. By keeping the same men on the job the electricians have been able to acquaint themselves with the machinery so do not have to

work 'in the dark'!

The development at Five Fords, a farm until 1891, is a far cry from the start of public drainage in Wrexham.

In 1863 the Wrexham Borough Council undertook a combined foul and surface water drainage scheme to serve a population of 8,500. Now, with the rapid growth of the Borough to a population of 40,000, Five Fords has expanded in tune to provide the high effluent standards required not only by the Borough but by the large Wrexham Industrial Estate, the urbanised regions of the rural area and the village of Marchwiel which it also serves.

The recent expansion, which at £2 million represents one of the biggest single capital investments in the provision of drainage and sewage treatment and disposal facilities in the principality in recent times, involved the construction of a three-mile length of trunk sewer, costing £370,000, along the Clywedog Valley on the south side of the town.

MANWEB, by maintaining the equipment, is helping also to maintain Wrexham's and indeed North Wales' impressive reputation for sophisticated effluent standards.

## Obituary

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

**Mr. Bill Jones**, production engineer at Mid-Mersey District.

Mr. Jones joined the industry as an apprentice with St. Helens Corporation in 1937, becoming a meter tester in 1942 and a senior meter tester in 1945. Except for a few months with an outside meter firm he spent the rest of his career in the supply industry.

In 1946 he transferred to the mains department of Birkenhead Corporation, becoming a section engineer at Widnes after nationalisation. In 1963 he became a 1st assistant engineer at Warrington, and following re-organisation took up the post of production engineer with the new District.

An exceptionally popular man, Mr. Jones gave a great deal of time and energy to the welfare of his colleagues, being active in union work for the NJB staff. Colleagues from many parts of the MANWEB area, and other Boards, attended the funeral service.

Mrs. Jones asks to thank all colleagues and friends for their sympathy and tributes, and for the help given to the family.

**Mr. Arthur R. Jump** who retired from the Board in 1965 after 50 years' service in the industry. He started his career during the first World War and as a foreman electrical fitter in the mid-20's worked on the early types of substation.

Later as the Distribution Engineer for the Wirral he was responsible for commissioning many of the substations supplying the whole of the peninsula, and for developing the Birkenhead D.C. network, only to be responsible for supervising the change over to A.C. several years later. On nationalisation he was District Engineer of Birkenhead transferring to Chester as senior assistant engineer (Construction) in 1954.

**Mr. Kevin Lalone**, aged 18, who was drowned on 7th July while on holiday.

Kevin, who was born in Ger-

many and spent his early years in America, had worked at our Clwyd District Office for the past two years. He was a clerk in the consumer amendments section.

He was very ambitious and was a keen all-round sportsman. He represented the District in 'five-a-sides' and his last participation was in the 'Knockout' contest (reported on page 147).

Kevin was a very popular member of the District staff and he will be sadly missed.

**Mr. Arthur Lawton**, a service electrician at Warrington for 25 years until his retirement in 1970. He was aged 70.

## APPRECIATION

Mrs. Lilly Davies, widow of Mr. Len Davies, of Dee Valley District (whose death was reported in last month's 'Contact') asks that Len's colleagues at District and Head Office be thanked for a big collection, in lieu of flowers, which has gone to the Kidney Research Association and the Samaritan Ward of Wrexham War Memorial Hospital.



Surrounded by friends and colleagues, Mr. Harry Hegarty, *centre left*, says his farewells to his chief, Mr. A. P. Whyte.

## RETIREMENTS

### Mr. H. W. HEGARTY

The conference room area at Head Office was packed to capacity by friends and colleagues of Mr. Harry Hegarty on the occasion of his retirement a few weeks ago. Among those present were Messrs. B. R. Hastings (*Deputy Chairman*), K. S. Leach (*Deputy Chief Accountant*) and A. P. Whyte (*Chief Accountant*) who made the official presentation.

Before handing over the parting gifts, Mr. Whyte outlined Harry's career of long and loyal service and spoke of the conscientious way he had carried out his exacting duties during his 45 years' in the industry.

Harry, who worked for the former Liverpool Corporation, joined MANWEB in 1949. While with the Board he served as the Assistant Accountant with the former Area 3 and as Accountant with the former Area 4. In the mid-1960's he was seriously ill for a while following a thrombosis attack. He made a good recovery and in 1970 he was appointed as

Assistant Chief Accountant (Finance) at Head Office, the post he held on retirement.

Harry told us that he now intends to devote much more of his time to his garden, which he loves and he is thinking of taking up golf. He also intends joining his wife Ailsa on visits to their two daughters now living in Dawlish and Derby.

### Mr. G. E. STEPHENS

Administrative assistant in our North Wirral District consumer accounting section, Mr. George E. Stephens retired recently after nearly 30 years' service in our industry.

He worked as a meter reader/collector with the former Birkenhead Corporation before joining MANWEB. After a spell in the former Area 3 Revenue section he transferred to North Wirral District in 1956.

For several years George was the Hon. Treasurer for the North Wirral Branch of Nalگو and for the former Birkenhead Sports and Social Club.

A keen sportsman, he was a football referee for 27 years, reaching Class 1 status. For several years

A parting gift to Mr. George Stephens, *centre left*, from his many friends in North Wirral District, is handed over by Mr. Bob Evans.





A happy group from Liverpool District gave a great 'send-off' to Mr. Jack Molyneux, seated left in light suit, on the occasion of his recent retirement.

he was Hon. Secretary of the Wirral Football Combination and the Birkenhead Sunday League. He is currently Secretary of the Wallasey Sunday League.

In the summer months, he turned to cricket and was umpire for Birkenhead Park Cricket Club for 15 years. He is now in his 11th season as umpire with the Oxtou Cricket Club.

Friends and colleagues subscribed to present him with a tape recorder as a parting gift. This was handed over to him by Mr. Bob Evans (*District Administrative Officer*).

#### Mr. J. MOLYNEUX

After more than 42 years' service in the electricity supply industry, Jack Molyneux, an e.h.t. jointer in our Liverpool District, recently retired.

He first entered public service when he worked for the Liverpool Corporation Tramways Department. A few years later, in 1933, he transferred to the Electricity Department where he was employed as a jointer's mate.

During the last war, Jack served in the R.E.M.E. on various battle fronts around the world.

In 1946 he resumed his civilian occupation and worked through promotions to become an e.h.t. jointer, and on nationalisation a couple of years later, he transferred to Liverpool Central District and later to Lister Drive.

A most popular and well-respected foreman, Mr. Fred J. Keen, senior, centre left, in dark pullover, left behind many friends when he retired recently. On the extreme right of the picture is his son, Mr. Fred J. Keen, junior.



For many years Jack ran a very successful youth football team, but his interest of late has been in gardening.

The esteem in which he is held by his colleagues was reflected by the large numbers who turned up at his farewell presentation ceremony. Their parting gifts were handed over by Mr. Joe Owen (*1st engineer, Production*).

#### Mr. F. J. KEEN, Senior

A father and son link with the Board at Llangefni in the persons of Fred Keen, senior and Fred Keen, junior, broke up recently on the retirement of senior from his job as engineering foreman at the depot.

After service with Henleys, Fred Keen, senior, joined the North Wales Power Company at Caernarfon in 1934. Four years later he moved to Anglesey where he worked as a linesman and then as a jointer. He has been a popular and well-respected foreman for longer than most of the present staff remember.

At a farewell presentation ceremony, Mr. Russell Shaw (*District Engineer*) thanked Fred for the loyalty and help he had given to the staff over the years. He referred to the many changes which had taken place in Anglesey during the last 40 years and of how Fred had always been able to adapt to them.

Mr. Ariel Thomas (*Production Engineer*) and many of Fred's colleagues added their words of appre-



A farewell at Legacy garage depot when Mr. Jim Davies (1st engineer—Transport), right, has a parting handshake for Mr. Gerald Crump on the occasion of his retirement.

ciation and good wishes before Mr. O. Richard Thomas, a newly-qualified linesman, presented his foreman with a motor mower for himself and a bouquet of flowers for Mrs. Keen, from all their friends at MANWEB.

No longer at Llangedfn will it be heard 'Fred J. Keen, senior, and Fred J. Keen junior' but taking its place will be 'Fred J. Keen, retired, and Fred J. Keen chargehand electrician'.

#### Mr. G. CRUMP

Although only with the Board for a comparatively short time, Mr. Gerald Crump, a fitter in our transport depot at Legacy made a host of friends.

Before joining us Gerald worked in the aircraft industry with De Havillands and Vickers Armstrong.

Keenly interested in motor racing, he has many

trophies on his sideboard which he won when driving in motor rallies.

His plans for the future include a trip to Durban in South Africa and to Auckland in New Zealand to visit his two daughters. His other offspring, a son lives in Wrexham.

All Gerald's colleagues at Legacy wished him health and happiness in retirement as they presented him with a cheque and a scroll.

#### Mr. A. NICHOLAS

Before joining MANWEB nearly 20 years ago, Mr. Alfred Nicholas was a civil servant with the Ministry of Supply. He came to the Board as an electrician and retired recently as foreman installation inspector.

From the collection made by friends and colleagues at Craven Street, Alfred bought a teasmade.

## An Open Letter

Dear Sir,

Amongst its many activities in recent years, the Electrical and Electronics Industries Benevolent Association has developed Buckingham Court, Selly Oak, Birmingham, a most attractive complex of single and double self-contained flats for retired persons from our industries. Much to our surprise, there has apparently been insufficient demand for the accommodation provided and, indeed, there are current vacancies of single units.

When the decision was taken to develop flats at Birmingham it was

intended that this should be a pilot scheme for other similar developments throughout the United Kingdom and that every effort would be made to ensure that such developments were sited in districts where they would fill the greatest need. A site has been acquired at New Moston, Manchester and with the help of the Housing Corporation it is planned that our second development of flats will be erected there.

In view of the vacancies still existing at our Birmingham development two questions must arise, firstly, are we right in the selection

of our sites and secondly, does the need really exist to provide such accommodation for retired personnel from our industries. We have sought the opinions of our local Branches and of many employers within the areas selected but it would be of very considerable help to us to receive the opinions of your readers on these two particular aspects. This is a cry for help and we hope your readers will respond accordingly.

Yours faithfully

Derek Bignold, Director and Secretary, E.E.I.B.A., 8 Station Parade, Balham High Road, London SW12 9BH.