

Contact

May 1979

Teaming up to sell
(see page 97)



North Wirral District Engineer

Mr. John E. Powell, aged 50, has been appointed North Wirral District Engineer. He vacates the post of principal engineer, operations and maintenance, at Head Office.

He joined the Board in 1953 as a graduate trainee, and has held a variety of engineering posts at Liverpool, North Wales, Northwich and Chester.

Born in West Kirby, he was educated at Caldy Grammar School, Bradford Technical College and Liverpool University, where he gained an engineering degree.

John is married and he and his wife Muriel have two teenage sons, Michael and James. He played rugby for the Old Caldeians for ten seasons and now enjoys caravanning, cine photography and "do-it-yourself".



ELECTRIC VEHICLES

—a bright future

Government plans to phase out vehicle excise duty are welcomed by the Electric Vehicle Association of Great Britain.

The Government's attitude towards electric vehicles is in the Department of Transport report 'The Future of Vehicle Excise Duty'.

'Electric-powered vehicles', it says 'will not be subject to any increase in fuel costs, but there is a case for ending VED on these vehicles on energy policy and environmental grounds'.

Electric vehicle owners have always benefited through an encouraging concession in the UK whereby VED on an electric vehicle is some 25 per cent less than that on an equivalent spark

or compression ignition engined vehicle. This recognises the environmental advantages of electrics in terms of less noise, less vibration and less wear and tear on the road surfaces.

Special Letters

From our former Manager of Area 2, Mr. Sydney C. Harling, who retired in January 1965.

"Agorfa," Bull Bay, Anglesey, Gwynedd.

Dear Sirs,

I have just read in 'Contact' of the tragic case of Sara Jane Williams and will you kindly see that the enclosed cheque is forwarded to the appropriate fund.

Yours etc.

Mr. Harling's very welcome cheque has been handed to the Fund Committee set up at our Oswestry District Office.

"ENFIELD" EVALUATION

The Electricity Council's basic evaluation of the Enfield 8000 battery electric car is published in an illustrated report, "The Enfield Electric Car - Project."

Enfield Automotive Ltd produced 112 Enfield 8000 electric cars before ceasing production in 1976. The Electricity Council purchased half of this output and the complete stock of spares for its four year evaluation programme. The first phase of the project, during which the fleet of cars covered more than 25,000 miles, has provided the opportunity to eliminate defects in design and manufacture.

The report describes the technical and operational problems encountered and ways in which these have been overcome. "The battery remains the most important component requiring further development, although substantial improvements have been made over the past 4 years and further developments are in progress," says the Report.

The evaluation work will continue, with all cars renovated and modified to improve performance and reliability.

And one from the dim and distant past—a letter written by Llandudno Council's electrical engineer over 80 years ago.

Electricity Works
Nov. 7th 1898

Dear Sir,

Advertising to our conversation of even date, the extra cost for cable over 20 yards will be at the rate of 1s 10½d per yard plus 6d a yard for trenching and making good.

Yours etc.

Younger readers can think in terms of about 12p a yard (including the trenching!)

Contact

THE STAFF MAGAZINE
OF THE
MERSEYSIDE AND
NORTH WALES
ELECTRICITY BOARD

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May 1979

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EVERYBODY SELLS

JUST as "caring for customers" is, to a greater or lesser extent, the responsibility of every member of the MANWEB staff, so the business of selling electricity, appliances, and other services is a task which cannot be left to a minority of our colleagues.

This year's Sales Conference—hitherto an 'all-Commercial' affair—broke new ground with the audience-involvement of other MANWEB people, many of whom found the Conference an interesting and stimulating experience.

Good relationships between ourselves and the public are indivisible. While the actual business of selling—as such—is primarily the job of those of our Commercial colleagues who are paid to do just that, there is no doubt that the ground can be prepared and the path smoothed by good customer service, courtesy, and tact, in all aspects of our contact with the public.

To some extent it is true that electricity sells itself. But economic pressures and social changes during recent years have seen to it that in some directions at least our industry has been compelled to struggle hard to maintain any kind of growth.

The Conference—fully reported in this number of *Contact*—was presented round the slogan "*Teaming up to Sell*". Selling electricity and the other goods and services we offer is very much a matter of teamwork, calling for a conscious effort by every one of us to protect and enhance the good name of MANWEB.

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.



Judges and organisers of the Liverpool District Arts and Crafts exhibition. From left to right: Mr. Les Sale, Mr. Tom Hamilton, Mrs. Margaret McKie, Mr. Peter Falcon, Mrs. Vicki Roberts, Mr. A. Tibbs, Mr. Ted Kelly and Mrs. Trudi Skinner.

Arts and Crafts on Show in Liverpool District



Above: Mr. Peter Falcon presents awards in the knitting/crocheting section to prizewinners, from left to right: Mrs. Joan Mitchell, Miss Lil Calvert, Miss Mareta Mouncey and Mrs. Lil Cooke.

Below: Men with paying hobbies, from left to right, Messrs. Ken Scunthorpe, Roy Hughes and Gordon Cummine, collect their prizes from Mr. Falcon. Also in the picture is Mrs. Vicki Roberts, one of the organisers and our 'Contact' correspondent.



The recent exhibition of Arts and Crafts created by members of our Liverpool District staff—and their families—was held at the Thingwall Road Clubhouse.

Following on the success of their first venture in 1977, the organising committee were agreeably surprised with the active interest among the staff.

The exhibits in the various sections were of an extremely high standard so much so that the judges, in several instances, felt it necessary to award 'Highly Commended' certificates.

Returning to Liverpool for the occasion were two former members of the District's management staff, Mr. Peter Falcon, who presented the prizes, and Mr. Tom Hamilton, who had the happy task of judging the wine-making section.

A most pleasurable afternoon was rounded off with an excellent buffet tea.

Prizewinners
opposite ▶



Above, time for food and right, time to dance at the recent highly successful Social Evening for Liverpool District staff.

Social Evening

Keeping up the activity at the Thingwall Road Clubhouse following Liverpool District's Arts and Crafts Exhibition on 28th April, a 'Social Evening' was arranged.

This was very well attended by members of the District Sports and Social Club with their partners and friends. Once again the popular disc jockey Ted Potter was in charge of the music and a buffet supper was laid on.



ARTS AND CRAFTS PRIZE-WINNERS

Photography (Black & White)

1. Mr. P. Johnson
2. Mr. P. Johnson
3. Mr. W. Kelly

Photography (Colour prints)

1. Mr. A. J. Kennedy
2. Mrs. V. A. Roberts
3. Mr. G. W. Hill

Art Paintings

1. Mr. P. Johnson
 2. Mrs. E. Whitehead
 3. Mrs. E. Whitehead
- HC. Mr. K. Little

Hobbies (Men's Section)

1. Mr. Roy Hughes
2. Mr. K. Scunthorpe
3. Mr. G. Cummine

Hobbies (Women's Section)

1. Mrs. C. Calvert
2. Mrs. V. Hughes
3. Miss Y. France

Knitting & Crotchet

1. Miss M. Mouncey
 2. Mrs. J. Mitchell
 3. Mrs. L. Calvert (joint)
Mrs. L. Cooke (joint)
- HC. Mrs. E. Potter and
Mrs. L. Thomas

Pot Plants

1. Mrs. M. Martin
2. Mrs. L. Beech
3. Mrs. L. Beech

Cake Making (own choice)

1. Miss G. Potter
 2. Mrs. E. Potter
 3. Mrs. J. Mitchell
- HC. Mrs. M. Kirby and
Mrs. E. Smeardon

Soft Toys

1. Mrs. E. Owens
 2. Mrs. T. Kelly
 3. Mrs. E. Smeardon
- HC. Mrs. D. Alcock

Dressmaking

1. Miss S. Bush
 2. Mrs. G. Skinner
 3. Mrs. M. Kirby
- HC. Miss S. Bush and
Mrs. L. Thomas

Flower arranging

1. Mrs. M. Kirby
 2. Mrs. G. Collins
 3. Mrs. L. Thomas
- HC. Mrs. G. Skinner

Wine Making

1. Mr. K. Mawdesley
2. Mr. P. Johnson
3. Mr. G. W. Hill

Children's Corner

1. Susan Kelly
2. Diane Cain
3. David Potter

HC—Highly Commended.

Talking Notes

CHAIRMAN JOAN

A busy year lies ahead for Mrs. Joan Dittrich, our catering specialist at Head Office, who was recently elected Chairman of the North Wales Division of the Cookery and Food Association for the year 1979/80.

The Association is a nationwide organisation supported by hoteliers and caterers of the more professional type, and puts considerable effort into trying to raise catering standards, especially through the various colleges where future chefs and caterers receive their training.

Joan's first important public function in her new role of

Chairman came at the Division's Annual Awards Dinner, held at a Llandudno hotel recently. She was called upon to present the Association's awards to the Chef of the Year and to the most outstanding students at Llandrillo Technical College, Colwyn Bay, Kelsterton College, Connah's Quay, and the Montgomery College of Further Education, Newtown (where she is MANWEB's representa-

Catering specialist from Head Office, Joan Dittrich, centre, looks on as Marcia Wyn Williams is presented with her award as the Outstanding Student of the Year at Kelsterton College. Making the presentation is Gordon Funnell (National Chairman of the Cookery and Food Association).



tive to the Board of Governors)

Among Joan's other duties during the year will be to make sure that the voice of the Welsh catering industry comes through loud and clear at national meetings of the Association.

A Service to Schools

Published as part of the 'Understanding Electricity' educational service, "My First Electric Cookbook," is a candidate for instant success. Specially designed for children aged from 7 to 11, the recipes are simple and practical, and printed on non-tear wipe-clean paper. The book is just one of the many new items of interest to children and schools in the 1979 edition of the 'Understanding Electricity' catalogue, which was launched at a reception in London recently.

Introducing the catalogue, Mr. Duncan McGrouther, Member of the Electricity Council, said that last year there were 6,500 film borrowings, which was more than double that of the previous year. In the first two months of this year 1,000 parcels of material have been despatched to schools. This number was quite apart from requests received and fulfilled by the other partners in the service.

Mr. McGrouther explained that 'Understanding Electricity' was an educational service provided by the electricity supply industry throughout the United Kingdom and the Republic of

Ireland. It was aimed at improving the knowledge of young people about basic electrical principles and their practical applications as well as providing background information on the use of electricity in industry, the home, commerce, agriculture and horticulture to students specialising in these matters.

Play Safe, the safety film for schools, was introduced last year and it was estimated that it had already been seen by some 100,000 children through lendings. In addition, 100 copies of this very good film had been sold.

Three new filmstrips showed how electricity is distributed and used in the home, with particular emphasis on safety. These were expected to have a wide appeal.

"We are hoping to cooperate with a leading educational journal in a painting competition, and we aim too, to produce a booklet about nuclear power which can be easily understood by children. This may be an appropriate time to mention the new service we have introduced to provide speakers on "Energy and Nuclear Power" to any school, society, club or other organisation which applies. We also plan to add to our very popular series of information sheets both on domestic subjects and on industrial and scientific subjects." added Mr. McGrouther.

Fast Bird

The fabulous racing pigeon "Mark's Pride" is the pride and joy of joint owners David Lloyd, a driver of the appliance delivery vehicle operating from our Legacy depot, and his friend David Jones.

The feathered speedster is a very fast bird indeed. It clocked up an average of nearly



Mr. Denis Dodds, right, former Chairman of MANWEB, who is Chairman of the Regional Branch of the EEIBA, presents a cheque for £2,200 to Mr. Derek Bignold (Director and Secretary, EEIBA) at the Branch's Annual Ball in Liverpool. Also in the picture are Mrs. Bignold, left, and Mrs. Dodds.

David Lloyd, right, and David Jones, the successful team of pigeon fanciers with the glittering display of trophies won by their birds during the course of their partnership in recent years.



50 miles an hour when covering the 406 miles from Nantes, in France, in eight hours 45 minutes. For this fine effort its owners shared the £1,051 prize money.

The two Davids have been in partnership for some time now and have a magnificent show of trophies to prove their success.

Staff Sales

Staff terms for the purchase of appliance and counter sundries from Board shops have recently been improved, while special terms are available for television and radio rentals.

Full details are available on notice boards or from your LAC representative.

Tournament

Members of our Head Office badminton group went along to the Northgate Arena, Chester a short time ago to take part in a tournament organised by **David P. Booth** (2nd engineer, System Management) and **Jack Sutton** (Chester shop), who also presented the prizes.

A number of qualifying games played on a handicap basis resulted in a final match in which **Joe Pugh** (Computer Services) and partner **Joan Hughes** (former secretary to the

Marketing Manager) beat **Keith Hughes** and **Anthea Hibbert**.

New Arrival

Congratulations to **Gerard** and **Daphne Edwards** on the birth of their daughter, **Victoria Louise**, who weighed in at 6lb 6oz.

Up until the time of her confinement Daphne was the secretary to Mr. Reg Huyton, (Assistant Chief Accountant), and Gerard is employed by Hawker Siddely.

We understand mother, daughter, and 'Dad,' are doing fine.

Film Award

In an international festival of educational films held in Belgrade recently, the Bronze Medal was awarded to the Understanding Electricity service film "Play Safe".

The film warns children of the dangers of playing near overhead power lines and substations.

This is the second award gained by "Play Safe" having been judged as the best film in the 'Safety' category at a festival in Paris.

Wedding

Best wishes for future happiness go to **Gerald Carlton**, an instrument inspector with



Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Carlton.

the technical section at Crane Bank, Chester, and **Miss Sue Stewart**, who were married on Easter Saturday. Their home is now at Wrexham.

Gerald joined the Board as apprentice in 1950, later working at Legacy depot as an electrician before joining the technical section in 1973.

HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION

Luxury two and three bedroomed bungalows to let in the Great Yarmouth area. All fully carpeted, with TV, electric cooking, and bathrooms.

Write Mr. D. Baker, 19 Lilliard Close, Hoddesdon, Herts, or 'phone Hoddesdon 67579 or 61402.

Holiday cottage to let. Six miles from Pwllheli — August fully booked—for other dates please 'phone 076-688 399 or write: Mrs. G. P. Jones, Tyddan, Bach, Pencae, Newydd, Pwllheli.

Anything

FOR SALE

or WANTED?

Send details to The Editor, 'Contact,' 4S1, Head Office.

Finalists in the Badminton Tournament, from left to right: Keith Hughes, Joan Hughes, Anthea Hibbert and Joe Pugh.



Sales Conference 1979

INTO THE 1980's

Teaming up to sell

Anyone thinking that the MANWEB Sales Conference was some sort of conclave for Commercial staff only would be totally wrong. For this year's gathering saw a fair representation of members of all other departments. The conference theme of "Teaming up to Sell" was directed at all sections of the Board, urging greater co-operation.

Chairing the assembly, Derek Holman, Deputy Chief Commercial Officer, welcomed delegates to the now-traditional venue of the meeting, the Chester College of Further Education. Experience has developed a very professional standard of stage presentation, with music, films, slides, sketches and lighting being used with split second timing, to highlight and emphasise the speakers' words, and to sustain audience interest.

Introducing the first speaker, Mr. Holman told delegates that neither a Chairman nor a Deputy had spoken to the conference before and was pleased to welcome Richard Gales, the MANWEB Deputy Chairman, to address the meeting.

Setting the scene, Mr. Gales said that the immediate prospects for electricity sales were not too bright. Industrial sales were expected to rise by about 3 per cent with domestic consumption only rising by half that figure each year over the next ten years.

Intense competition with the advent of North Sea Gas, compounded by the 1973 oil crisis, and the downturn in the economy, had retarded the Electricity Industry's expansion. However, the longer term prospects were bright, because nuclear power was the only proven alternative to fill the future energy gap which would occur with the forecast shortage of fossil fuels. Nuclear power had an exceptional safety record and therefore care should be taken not to over-react to the recent

accident at the Three Mile Island Nuclear Power Station.

In recent years the decline of the home heating load had been the major cause of the drop in domestic sales. This was a vital market to MANWEB because other high energy using appliances, particularly cookers, frequently went to the fuel used for space heating.

The industry had started to develop tools to meet the challenge of the competition. The new seven-hour tariffs were already assisting in recapturing storage heating sales, and would be a firm foundation with which to defend existing load and build on in the 1980's.

Mr. Gales congratulated staff on their achievements in increasing shops sales during 1978/9 by an estimated 20 per cent, and contracting sales by an anticipated 25 per cent. In the year ahead it was intended to retain the lower percentage profit margins to remain competitive, but seek an increased turnover.

The Deputy Chairman emphasised the need for all staff, not just commercial, to support electricity sales, help defend existing load, and seek new business, so that the Electricity Industry remained healthy and strong until gas and oil reserves began to dwindle,



Richard Gales

when electricity sales would again be buoyant.

Keith Baldwin, the MANWEB Public Relations Officer, and the secretary of the Customer Relations Working Group, addressed the Conference on "The Customer Scene".

Legislation in recent years had given the customer a great deal more protection than ever before. Statutory bodies, officially appointed and sponsored organisations together with voluntary groups had been formed to represent the customer, and they had been joined by the mass media with their consumer programmes and columns, all championing the cause of fair trading.

Sharply rising electricity prices, the need to "ration" electricity on occasions due to industrial action, and the public dislike of impersonal attitudes of large organisations had caused a resentment toward the industry which must be dissolved.

In such a capital-intensive industry there were limits to what could be achieved by improving efficiency and internal economy. The whole of the distribution side

of the electricity industry was engaged on the programme known as *Customer Care*.

Mr. Baldwin commented, "It is intended that the *Customer Care* theme shall become a permanent part of the MANWEB way of life. Its purpose is to remove all obstacles leading to misunderstandings and bad relationships between ourselves and the public."



Keith Baldwin

By consulting staff, especially those with direct access to the public, the aim was to identify sources of annoyance and eliminate them. A booklet had been produced, illustrated by cartoonist Bill Tidy, together with posters, and drip mats, to publicise the areas in which care should be shown in dealing with the customer.

Concluding, Mr. Baldwin hoped that the *Customer Care* programme would sweep away bureaucratic tendencies and dissolve resentment, smoothing the path of the Commercial Department in meeting the exciting and formidable challenges of the 1980's.

An attentive audience



"*Taking Care of the Future—Selling Energy*" was the title of the Energy Sales Manager's presentation, and Bob Jowett used three short sketches to illustrate the range of work of the Energy Sales team.

Clwyd energy sales engineer, Ron Carter, who is usually a member of the backstage team but this year was in the limelight, played the part of a builder, and Head Office heating specialist Keith Hibbert was the man from MANWEB. Their dialogue demonstrated how the Energy Sales staff were convincing more and more developers and builders of the philosophy of insulating and reducing energy requirements, and controlling and reducing costs, with off-peak energy providing basic water heating and background warmth.

Having illustrated how new off peak load was being won, Mr. Jowett introduced the second sketch to demonstrate how sales staff were defending existing off-peak load.

Senior engineer Doug Gregg was the gentle MANWEB sales representative, and fellow senior engineer Malcolm Whalley the aggressive customer demanding the removal of his storage heaters because of their high running cost.

With a change of tariff, a modest outlay on loft and cavity wall insulation compared with the alternative of installing another fuel central heating system, and advice on adjusting the temperature control to suit outside conditions the customer is convinced to stay electric.

Leaving the domestic scene

there were two other major markets, the commercial and the industrial customers, with industry buying over half of the units sold. A complete specialist service was provided by MANWEB with the added resources of the Electricity Council at Capenhurst for the industrialist

The commercial market had been neglected for some years, but MANWEB had specialists in catering, lighting, air conditioning, heating, environmental and building design services, and they met with architects, consultants and developers to sell wise use of



Bob Jowett

energy and influence design decisions in our favour.

The final sketch acted out a meeting between an architect, played by John Edwards, the Head Office air conditioning and ventilation specialist, and lighting expert, Gerry Worthington as one of the Board's engineers. From the plans of a new building Gerry was able to point out improvements in lighting, development of the air-conditioning plan into a



Stage manager Norman Kenyon, Derek Holman, John Drew, sound, and Ian Hamilton, lighting

heat recovery system, and get in a plug for catering design.

In his summing up Mr. Jowett told delegates, "We offer to our customers a unique range of skills and expertise—a complete service which is second to none. Over the next few years, we will need to fight very hard to keep the meters turning at an increased rate, to ensure a level of growth in the long term which will enable the industry to expand rapidly to meet the country's requirements for energy"

The final item on the agenda for the morning session was presented by the Installation and Service manager, Mr. Don Higgs, ably assisted by Mid-Cheshire's Jim Bird and Mid-Mersey's Dave Cousins. "Into the 1980's with confidence—Selling Contracting and Servicing", was the title of their joint presentation.

The Installation and Service function launched a £6 million action plan in 1978, with that figure as their target for their turnover. This called for an increase of £1 million on the

previous year's trading. Mr. Higgs was able to tell his audience that the target had been exceeded.

An optimistic Mr. Higgs declared, "We are in great shape to take the Eighties by storm. I am confident we will do so. By good strategy, determination and teamwork, fired by pride in our success, profitable turnover will reach £7 million plus within twelve months. We will succeed by teaming up to sell—the full MANWEB team—nothing less will do."

The contracting and service business was divided into two main parts—domestic, and major contracting. It was Jim Bird who spoke about the domestic, commercial and smaller industrial market. Turnover and profit had come from inspection and re-wiring houses and commercial premises. Installing showers and intruder alarms as well as repair and service of appliances, and the repair plan, all helped sales. Mr Bird urged shop staff to sell the repair plan, and said that more publicity was to be given to it to

help their sales.

Mr. Higgs anticipated a major expansion of the larger contracting market. There was a tremendous potential in local authority and private housing, industrial



Dave Cousins

and commercial installation, high voltage work and inspection and maintenance work of all types.

He introduced Dave Cousins to explain how the Installation team at Mid-Mersey had raised their turnover. Mr. Cousins wore a chicken hat, and admitted that this was most apt for the attitude that he once had toward the major contracting market. He changed his approach and sought business more aggressively. By trimming prices the District managed to obtain more contracts, and thanks to excellent workmanship and personal contacts they gained a good reputation.

The first class teamwork from all sections of the District helped increase turnover, and despite

Jim Bird and Don Higgs



INTO THE 1980's

Teaming up to sell



Lion, Jean Pennington

The face behind the mask



John Edwards, below



lower profit margins in percentage terms, the gross profit in pound notes increased.

Searching for a symbol to epitomise the new mood in the District, which was one of pride, he chose the lion, and on stage came one of the most delectable lions you ever saw, wearing red leotard and tights with a lion's head mask was Jean Pennington, a clerical assistant in the Mid-Mersey District.

Closing the morning session Mr. Higgs reiterated the theme of the conference and urged delegates to team up and sell.

The hard seating made the luncheon break a welcome relief for delegates, and the non-arrival of cushions was the only hitch to affect the audience. Backstage, illness of projectionist Reuben Perry could have caused chaos as much depended on the timing of slides and films. However, John Edwards—the architect in an earlier sketch—stepped into the breach, learned quickly the operation of the back projection equipment, and the show went on uninterrupted.

The contribution of the Marketing Section to the conference was headed by Warwick Saunders, the Marketing Manager. He reviewed the progress in the property side of the business—the development of shops. For good reasons nine shops had been closed in recent years, several more had been resited or redeveloped. Considerable progress had been made in re-

building and modernising shops, and Mr. Saunders showed the "before and after" slides of several shops, such as Machynlleth, Colwyn Bay, Mold, Birkenhead, etc. This progress would continue, and Llandudno shop was in the process of being resited in a better trading position.

Turning to the sale of appliances account, Mr. Saunders used slides to illustrate how sales had fared over the last five years. Total sales had risen from £5.9 million in 1975 to an estimated £8.75 million in the year just ended. The target for the coming year was £9.8 million.

Inflation accounted for some of the cash increase, but some progress had been made. A deliberate policy of making prices more competitive had reduced profit margins, and in 1977 the gap between profit and costs came perilously close. However, the trend was one of reducing costs and rising profits, and the challenge was to maintain this position.

The decline in cooker sales concerned Mr. Saunders, and he introduced Sales Controller Bill Wakelin to talk about this problem.

Mr. Wakelin reviewed the development of the electric cooker, listing the many improvements over the older models and over our major competitor, the gas cooker. He urged more aggression in selling electric cookers—they were cheaper to buy, more efficient to use, easier

Warwick Saunders



to keep clean and had more features than gas cookers. MANWEB had slid to joint bottom of the cooker sales league for all Boards.

MANWEB had advantages to the customer over other electrical dealers. All models were B.E.A.B. approved, with qualified staff to sell and service cookers, free delivery and free connection.

A sketch showing the sale of a cooker terminated the appliance marketing presentation. The customers played by sales instructor Val Eastwood, and Julian Jenkins.



Bill Wakelin



Delegates from Oswestry, Liverpool and Head Office

Runcorn Shop, were sold a cooker by Chester shop's Brian McDonald, watched by the cashier Lynne Joyce, the Girl from MANWEB.

What was billed as "Future Advertising" by Advertising Officer Mr. Brian Spring, turned out to be a bright and breezy double act—"The Two Brians".

The other Brian was well-known TV personality Brian Trueman, who is currently starring in the MANWEB advertising campaign.

The objectives of the 1979/80 campaign were the same as those of the previous year—to make every pound spent count, publicise MANWEB's better prices and eliminate the belief that the Board was too expensive, and to emphasise the better deals offered

such as free delivery, expertise, guarantees, etc.

Co-operation with NORWEB will help to keep the cost down, particularly on television, but



MANWEB needed to put some "bite" into the campaign and it was decided to use a personality. The man chosen was, no not Count Dracula, but Brian Trueman (which was the cue for the TV man to make his surprise entrance).

Especially for the occasion he had composed a monologue ex-

tolling the virtues of electricity and MANWEB which he recited with the panache of a true thespian.

Then the "Two Brians" swung into their double act introducing the plans, films and sound track of MANWEB and the Electricity Council Advertising. The joint campaigns covered appliances, large and small, heating, water heating, the seven hour tariffs and storage radiators. Commerce and industry were not forgotten, nor were, it seems any one section of the Board's customers, with a special emphasis going on the younger age groups.

The range of media, too, was comprehensive, with the Board and the Electricity Council employing television, press, magazines, cinema, trade journals, radio, posters and direct mailing.



Bill Shires

All this and exhibitions, shop displays and literature, too. A very impressive publicity campaign which should give the sales staff every chance of meeting their appliance and contracting targets.

After an open forum with a wide range of questions it was the turn of the Chief Commercial Officer Bill Shires to speak to delegates and close the conference.

He thanked Messrs. Gales and Baldwin for their papers and emphasised Mr. Jowett's energy sales policy to sell the idea of low energy homes, defend and sell storage heating load, and promote the total energy concept.

Turning to contracting sales he noted the welcome increase in business, but warned that the Installation and Service Section must retain existing profit margins. Some plans in hand would help reduce costs, such as door-step billing, mail order for appliance spares direct from Queensferry warehouse, the central stocking of appliance spares, and the MANWEB Care Scheme.

The appliance marketing target of £9.8 million would, Mr. Shires was sure, be rounded off to the £10 million figure. There were no plans to close any more shops during the present year and he said it was not the Board's policy to close shops—but they had to pay their way!

The advertising presentation by the "Two Brians" had given delegates a full insight into the Board's publicity plans, and those produced nationally. There would be more co-operation between all Boards, and especially with NORWEB, with the emphasis on television advertising.

In closing the conference, Mr. Shires hoped that all staff would co-operate and team up to meet the challenge of the 1980's.



Delegates from Gwynedd . . .
. . . and North Mersey

On the page opposite we show more photographs of delegates who attended the 1979 Sales Conference.





Thanks for 'Customer Care'

from Liverpool . . .

District Sales Supervisor, Tom Saladine, was very pleased to receive the following letter from yet another satisfied customer.

"I should like to put on record my very real appreciation of the courtesy and consideration shown me today by Mr. McKay, manager of the MANWEB Prescot branch shop.

"I enquired for a Creda Corvette water heater, but apart from one on display (*minus the bracket as it was on a stand*) there was no other in stock. I needed the heater for my son and his young wife who, with two small toddlers, are moving this week-end into a house with no hot water—(*essential with small children's needs*).

"Mr. McKay rang around the district for me, but none of the local MANWEB shops had a Corvette bracket, but he said he would do what he could for me. He has just rung me to say that in his dinner-hour he has seen a joiner friend who has made a bracket, and I can now have the Creda Corvette which is on display.

"I cannot speak too highly of personal and concerned service such as this and I hope this will be noted at the appropriate level.

"With very real thanks to Mr. McKay."

Keep up the good work Michael.

. . . Dee Valley . . .

. . . from a Coedpoeth lady . . .

"I wish to say 'thank you' to one of your men who answered the telephone at 4.30 a.m. this morning.

"For two hours I had seen flashes of light coming from the electric

wiring attached to the house. I was in a panic, being terrified of the house going on fire.

"The calm, kind voice of the MANWEB man at the other end of the phone, giving assurance that there was no danger, was a great help to me in those hours of fear.

"Thank you for this service, and for the prompt attention to the wiring of you men this morning."

The "calm, kind voice" which soothes panicky ladies belongs to switchboard attendant John Evans.

* * *

and thanks for a wiring job from a Froncsyllte customer—

"We were impressed by the way your men did the work with efficiency, cleanliness, and total consideration for our convenience. The final job was so well done as to be barely noticeable. We also wish to express our appreciation of the helpfulness of Mr. C. F. Williams in coming out to assess the job."

Mr. Charlie Williams is senior sales rep for the District, and the efficient, considerate workmen were electrician Allan McClusky and apprentice Chris Allen.

. . . Gwynedd . . .

Another satisfied customer took the time and trouble to sit down and put his thoughts down on paper when he wrote to Mr. Barry Davies of our contracting department, to say:

"I have to report to you that Mr. Gareth Owen of your department and (on the second day) another young man, duly attended here and completed the installation of the four storage heaters which you saw on your visit to us on the 19th.

"I thought I would let you know that we were very pleased with the manner in which Mr. Owen undertook the work. He was extremely pleasant in his manner, co-operative in the house, tidy and efficient and, as far as we could tell, he completed the installation very satisfactorily.

"I think you ought to know that we were suitably impressed with Mr. Owen and his work."

Gareth is an electrician and the 'other young man' referred to is apprentice Geoffrey Roberts, both from our Llangeferni depot.

. . . Oswestry . . .

From a country hotelier, after the last blasts of winter disrupted supplies—

"Just a note to say how much we appreciated the effort made to restore electric power . . . when so many people in the country seem to be forgetting all sense of responsibility and duty it is good to find men who will work hard under really bad conditions to help us out."

. . . Mid-Mersey . . .

A customer writes . . .

"Having had an immersion heater installed at the above address I feel I must thank you for the speed and efficiency with which the job was carried out, and for the courtesy of the two young men concerned."

The "courteous young men" were electricians David Wright and Colin Keam, from our Run-corn depot.

. . . three from North Mersey . . .

. . . at Aintree . . .

"Just a line to let you know that I am very pleased with the storage heaters installed by MANWEB, and to thank Mr J. Duddle for getting me to have them installed.

It was through him explaining to me that they would meet my requirements as well as any other heating system. Also I must thank all your other staff."

... *Blundellsands* ...

"I have, today, had the electric meter moved from inside the house to a cupboard on the step in the porch.

"I would like you to know how pleased I am with the job, and particularly the neatness and punctuality of the workmen.

"I am sure you hear complaints so I would like you to know how pleased I am. Also with the gentleman who came to discuss the job with me and girls I have dealt with on the telephone."

"P.S. Please would you send the bill so I can get it paid."

Nice work Tommy Prendergast.

... *and Southport* ...

"Now that the rewiring of our house has been completed and satisfactory tests applied, my wife and I would like to thank yourself, Mr Cooper and Mr D. Ashworth very much indeed for what we regard as a highly satisfactory job.

"Further, I must mention how much we appreciated the carrying out of the work by Mr Ashworth without our experiencing a single moment's inconvenience as regards both heat and light, much to our amazement in view of the nature of the work, the time of year, and the prevailing cold weather throughout.

"Nor did we fail to appreciate Mr Ashworth's care and skill in fitting new plug points and switches without a single blemish to the immediately surrounding paint or wallpaper anywhere.

"Altogether, therefore, we would assure you of our complete satisfaction with our fire, new wiring and switching installation."

... and a bagful from Clwyd

A nice note from a young lady at Llandudno Junction:

"My fiance and I purchased a reconditioned cooker from your Llanrwst shop. It was minus a small knob on the timer and the glass door knob was slightly cracked. I am writing to say a big 'thank you' for your trouble in obtaining and fitting these knobs for us. You took no end of trouble in finding the timer knob and we really appreciate the time and trouble involved ... the cooker now looks like new!"

Bon appetit!

* * *

Our installation team at Clwyd were instrumental in keeping the tradition that 'the show must go on' when they answered a call recently and brought this letter of thanks from the promoter.

"Thank you for your help in preparing 'Foodfare '79' at what was very short notice indeed.

"In particular I would mention the efforts of your duty electrician, I think his name was Peter Espin, who worked throughout Monday and Tuesday morning at a fantastic rate and for much of the time single handed. He really was a credit to your organisation, which I know is often the target for criticism, I therefore think it is only right that praise be given where it is due.

"Thank you once again"

* * *

After completing the job of installing and wiring a couple of storage radiators, transferring an immersion heater circuit to 'off-peak' and putting in a MANWEB shower unit, our customer—a reverend gentleman—put pen to paper to write the following epistle:

"I herewith make reference to the work executed by your craftsmen.

"May it please you to know how much my wife and I appreciated their workmanship—no mess; absolute courtesy; and a splendid efficiency without any wasted time. They made a splendid job, which goes like a bomb!

"It was a pleasure to have them in our home and under these circumstances my wife and I thank you for the service.

"Furthermore, a word for the executives who first arrived to price the prime cost. They were most helpful in explanation—so gentlemen, under these happy circumstances, MANWEB and its customer are very satisfied.

"As a final peroration, may I state that neither craftsmen or your executives are known to my wife and I."

Time to take a bow Messrs. Arthur Thompson (senior sales rep.) and electricians Mark Price and Will Pierce.

* * *

... from a brewery architect, after rewiring a Llandudno pub—

"I am writing to express my satisfaction of the manner in which you have carried out these contracts. Would you please convey to Mr. Brynle Thomas and Mr. David Tompkinson, the electricians who carried out the work, my appreciation of the workmanlike manner with which they went about the jobs."

* * *

Words of appreciation—worth their weight in gold—from an Aberdovey councillor—

"I would like to give a word of praise to the work now being done on Aberdovey's sea-front. The job is well organised, the men are working well, and the job is, to my mind, being done properly.

"Nationalised industries are generally given some adverse criticism, but on this job I give you full marks."

Chargehand John Connor and his gang get the bouquet.

PRIZE CROSSWORD

For this month's Prize Crossword we are indebted to Yvonne Lloyd Jones, a former member of the staff of the salaries section at Head Office.

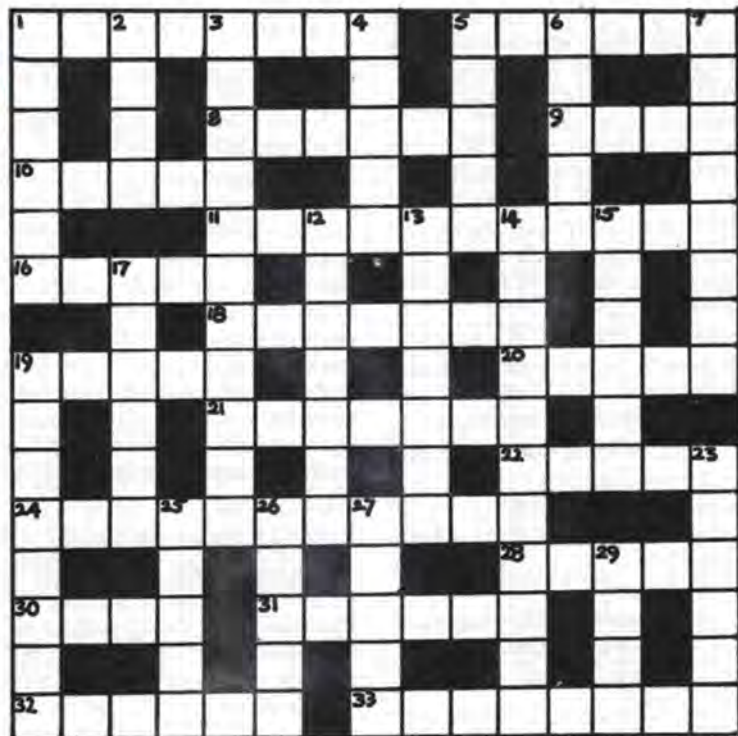
The competition is open to all MANWEB employees, pensioners and their families, and three prizes of £5 will go to the senders of the first three correct solutions opened.

Entries should be sent to The Editor, Contact, MANWEB Head Office, Sealand Road, Chester CH1 4LR. Closing date for the receipt of entries is June 18th.

Plain paper entries will be accepted, but please, only one entry per person.

Clues Across

- Swindle the goal for a victory!
- Proposals must be bad with hesitations.
- Dribble, but don't go right, or you'll make holes?
- Caviare can do without the chief accountant and I—we all agree.
- Cold water is good—but no exercise for a bit.
- Cain and Abel's air of mixed brotherly love was a hundred against comedy.
- Poor obese people always wear loose clothes.
- X number of skilled men get good deals?
- It could be colourful without Lou and his fifty on this island.
- Lions set emotion?
- He served the note, which was his entitlement.
- This plans is able? No!
- Cease!—A shoot-out is not necessary when selecting a chair?
- I op out—but ponder on drugs.
- I am German—and right well off!
- The old man has trouble with his boiler?



- The French come in with a note of admission.
- Not none—but a million hesitate overhead!
- Swindle the record? It's still not right to fly!
- The French love the right protection.
- The otter loses his heart and replaces it with Holland's head—but it's still not the same.
- 2 under par flies!
- Their mates are down with the vapours.
- The French Embassy has a strong will.

Clues Down

- The church is right when it concerns electric current in the trailer!
- It's no deal—to a point.
- Beneath the den we have take-overs!
- Albert is not right—but gets his revenge when he turns it.
- This is the last letter I write to No. 19.
- It's a feast! With good performances, too!
- Eastern grenades do not need a note to blast into song?
- If you want a flower—bask in a garden of them!
- The cruel North Eastener plants it.
- The office was torn apart especially—but not by Ely?
- A tomato in Diane's country would get him!
- Osborne offers us an island!

Obituary

Mr. George W. Fletcher, who served the industry for 40 years before his retirement two years ago from his job as foreman meter reader/collector in our North Wirral District.

Mr. Leslie J. Havill, aged 75, formerly 1st assistant Commercial engineer in the old Area 4 days.

Mr. W. T. Griffiths, who worked for many years in the Aberystwyth area, was a 1st assistant District Engineer prior to his retirement in 1966 due to ill health.

Mr. Glyn Wood, seen here with a few of his many friends at North Wirral, who wish him health and happiness in retirement.



≡ RETIREMENTS ≡

MR. G. WOOD

A really long-serving North Wirral colleague, in the person of Mr. Glyn Wood, shift electrician, has retired after nearly 50 years with the industry.

Glyn, who was a keen trade unionist and served on many local committees, was presented with a silver-plated chafing dish and silver candlesticks on behalf of the many friends he has made during his long service to electricity supply.

MR. F. WALKER

After 33 years' service to the industry Mr. Frank Walker, jointer's mate with North Wirral District, retired recently.

Frank, who served with Wingate's 'Chindits' in Burma during the second world war, has always enjoyed athletic hobbies, including walking and swimming. At one time he was a 'life-saver' at the Derby pool, Wallasey, and recently covered ten miles in a sponsored walk in aid of cancer research. Another favourite hobby is snooker, and on the eve of his retirement he won a MANWEB snooker competition.

On behalf of his friends and colleagues at Cleveland street he was presented with a vacuum cleaner and with best wishes for a long and active retirement.

Frank is married, with two children and four grand-children.

MR. A. MORGAN

After 29 years with the Board Mr. Arthur Morgan, a very popular member of the engineering staff at Aberystwyth, retired recently due to ill health.

Arthur began his employment with the Board as a linesman's mate, progressing through posts as linesman, meter fixer and records draughtsman and becoming a technical staff trainee in 1965. On completion of this course he became an assistant section engineer and an assistant systems engineer on re-organisation.

Presenting him with a sum of money on behalf of his colleagues, District Engineer Dewi Parry said it might help Arthur to find even more pleasure in his hobbies of fishing and model railway engineering.

MR. G. DAVIES

After more than 30 years service to the industry Mr. Gilbert Davies, meter-reader/collector at Dee Valley District, has retired.

Gilbert, a bachelor, started with Wrexham Corporation and worked subsequently at Willow Road and Rhostyllen.

On behalf of his many friends he was presented with a radio, a cigarette lighter, and a bottle of whisky.

MR. C. T. WOOD

After 15 years' service with the industry Mr. Charlie Wood, a jointer's mate at St. Helens, has retired. He joined us as a labourer before becoming jointer's mate.

On behalf of his colleagues he was presented with cuff links for himself and a watch for Mrs. Wood. His many friends wish him a long and happy retirement.

POETS' PAGE

"Customer Care"

"The customer is always right", (well, that's what I was taught),
So when I read page forty-four, it gave me food for thought,
Of course there are exceptions and to be absolutely fair
We all like reassuring him, by saying that "WE CARE".

Pressure on space unfortunately prevented us from publishing the following verses when we received them—during the Winter—but everyone likes to have a laugh at someone's expense.

The verses came from Mid-Cheshire District, and refer to the plight of a dedicated service electrician. We weren't given the full name—but no doubt everyone in the District knows it!

PENNY'S DILEMMA

The day started normal, like all
the rest,
Bob set out to do his best.

An office in town was having
trouble,
Robert was sent there—at the
double.

The weather that day was pretty
rough,
But the job he'd to do wasn't
that tough,
To climb on a roof to check
some cable,
A job of which we were sure he
was able.

Up his new ladder he went with
speed,
The howling wind he didn't heed,
But it wasn't so simple, he found
out too late,
His luck ran out—or was it fate?

The wind it blew harder—whipped
up to a gale,
Our Bob by now was becoming
quite pale,
Blowing the leaves and papers
around,
It then blew his ladder—which
fell to the ground.

But let us pause and think awhile and revue the situation,
Are we giving of our best and keeping up our reputation?
One problem could be bonus, are we rushing to get things done?
Sacrificing everything, for the penny and the bun?

I'm sure at night we offer prayers and recite them like a parrot,
"Give us our daily bonus Lord", we're braying for that carrot.
Now let us stop and think again, as we kneel on bended knees
Of the one who pays our wages, our bills and all our fees.

The CUSTOMER we call him, he is MANWEB's V.I.P.
But when he calls or 'phones us, do we show efficiency?
We'd like to give him all he asks and perhaps a little more,
Sometimes it's not too easy and that's when he gets sore.

Day after day we try and try, our dexterity getting stronger,
The difficult jobs we do right away, but the miracles take us longer,
If for an answer to a problem, you find you're at a loss
Don't ever try to 'con' him, it will only make him cross.

Another problem could be paper, (suppose it's handy in its place)
But if we make too much of it, it then slows down our pace.
Do we all need little memos, floating to and fro?
We know some are essential, but a lot of them could go.

Are we pulling all together and I don't mean just *pro tem*?
Because we can't afford a tug-of-war, or play US and THEM.
Every District has expanded—have we lost our personal touch?
We know the customer relies on us, are we caring just as much?

So the statement that I opened with, may not be strictly true,
But when he seeks expert advice, damn sure he'll come to you.
So the thing we must remember, show him a little fuss,
Because if our roles should ever change, then the customer is US!

"Kusta McKair"

(These inspired verses are from the imaginative pen
of Henry Blackwell, our Commercial foreman at Oswestry.)

Bob who, of course, was fed up
to the teeth,
Stared at his ladder—shattered
beneath,
A posse was formed to rescue Bob,
Who was after all, just doing
his job.

But he must have felt daft, up
there all alone,
No-one about to hear him moan,
But all we can say as we blink
back the tears,
IT'S THE BEST LAUGH THE
OFFICE HAS HAD FOR
YEARS.