

GDM 333N

BENTON

CONTACT

November 1975

Fault Finding
(See page 262)

THE WORLD'S BEST

Pioneering new techniques

The most up-to-date fault location vehicle in the world is now being operated by MANWEB, tracking down faults in our 12,000 miles of underground cable. And it is pioneering techniques likely to be accepted as standard practice in the future in the British electricity supply industry.

The new vehicle represents a joint enterprise between MANWEB, the Electricity Council's Research Centre at Capenhurst, and BICC. It is fitted with equipment which enables an operator sitting at the van's control console to locate faults on cables up to 33,000 Volts, usually within an hour.

A radical departure from existing methods came in 1966 when MANWEB were the first to introduce into Britain equipment which had been developed in Germany, making use of the "radar detection" principle. The principle involves the transmission of a signal along the wires of the cable, and the reflection of the signal back from the fault. A calculation based on the speed of the 'pulse' enables the fault to be located within a few yards.

OUR COVER PICTURE shows test vehicle operators Chris Stevens, *foreground*, and Stuart Roberts running out the test cable to set up for a fault location.

In order to pinpoint the fault with complete accuracy a shock wave is then discharged into the cable, and this gives rise to a 'bang' or 'crack' at the point of the fault. This can be detected at ground level, at the spot, by examining the 'search area' with a microphone.

Although the equipment represented a considerable advance in fault location techniques it was felt that further improvement was possible.

Research into fault location methods was already in progress at the Electricity Council's Research Centre at Capenhurst, where an 'impulse current' technique was developed. This was a high voltage adaptation of the radar principle, the reflected high voltage pulse being analysed to enable the 'search area' of the fault to be determined.

MANWEB engineers collaborated in the field trials during the development which resulted in an advanced specification being issued for a new fault location vehicle—to be constructed by BICC.

The vehicle was delivered to MANWEB earlier this year and represents a new standard in the speed and efficiency of fault location.

The new van, based at Chester, is operated by members of our Technical department under the direction of Mr. Harold Wilson (*Fault location and test engineer*), and is giving a 24 hour service to all MANWEB Districts. So far this year more than 50 faults have been located with the vehicle, and engineers from the London, North-Eastern, North-Western, Midlands and Scottish Electricity Boards have visited MANWEB to see the new techniques being applied in practical conditions.



Mr. Harold Wilson at the control panel of the fault location vehicle.

Tailpiece
Harold could have done with the fault location vehicle when he was on holiday recently in Ibiza where a terrific thunderstorm struck the island cutting off electricity supplies from 4 a.m. to 9 p.m.



CONTACT

Vol. 27 No. 11

November 1975

Editorial

'Firsts' for Efficiency

*On other
pages . . .*

DJAC Conference	264
"Low-profile" overhead line	266
Dee Valley District Employees Meeting	268
Talking Notes	270
New Shop at Runcorn	275
Mid-Cheshire District Employees Meeting	276
Retirements	279
Pensioners Page	280

ENORMOUS sums of money are invested in the generation and distribution of electricity in Britain. A new modern power station involves capital expenditure running into hundreds of millions, while several million pounds are spent each year in extending and improving the MANWEB distribution system alone.

Investment on such a scale is both necessary and justified, in view of the absolutely vital role played by our industry in the national economy. Britain benefits from the world's most reliable electricity supply.

When capital expenditure on such a scale is involved, it is essential that no effort is spared in the search for greater efficiency and economy. Throughout the industry, in many different ways, there is constant research for working methods which can reduce capital outlay and save labour and fuel costs.

This number of *Contact* contains descriptions of two innovations pioneered by MANWEB in the recent past. Both are paying dividends, saving time and money.

The new-model fault location van is cutting down the time and effort involved in tracing underground faults, while the pioneering "low profile" overhead line in Anglesey sets an improved and more economic pattern for the overhead distribution of electricity at 132 kV.

Both of these MANWEB 'firsts' are attracting widespread interest, and may well set new standards of electrical engineering practice. Those associated with them have given valuable service to MANWEB, the industry and the nation.

Editorial Staff

Phone H.O.

Keith Baldwin 2164
John F. Perry 2167
Sam Doughty 2166

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.



The Chairman speaks at the DJAC Conference. Seated are Mr. W. F. Cusworth, of the CEGB, and Dr. A. T. Churchman of the Research Centre.

DJAC CONFERENCE

“OUR ASSETS MUST BE USED” — *Chairman*

DESPITE the need to conserve energy there was “no reason for the electricity supply industry to abdicate its position in the market place,” said MANWEB Chairman **Mr. Denis Dodds**, reporting on the current situation from the MANWEB point of view, to the recent District Conference organised by No. 9 District Joint Advisory Council.

The conference, attended by representatives from both sides of the industry, was held at the Electricity Council’s Research Centre at Capenhurst, and Mr. Dodds occupied the chair for the day’s deliberations.

“Selling electricity, within the terms of conservation policy, is correct!” he declared. “We are the most capital-intensive of all industries, and if the nation’s capital resources are to be used effectively it is essential that we make proper use of our immense assets.”

The Chairman stressed that in certain fields of operation, where electricity could do a job more efficiently than any other fuel, it was possible that increased electricity consumption could bring about an overall reduction in the use of fuel.

Commenting on the fact that industrial demand for electricity had fallen, and that domestic demand had ceased to expand, the Chairman said that this situation arose first from a world-wide recession stemming from the big increase in oil prices, and secondly from a British recession caused by a high rate of inflation. These factors, combined with price restraint, had led to massive deficits for the electricity industry.

If our industry was to be viable in the future it was essential that our prices should reflect the true cost of generation and distribution, that inescapable cost increases should be minimised, and that all other costs should be reduced wherever possible, said the Chairman.

Reduced demand meant less need to invest on distribution networks, and Area Boards must keep

constant watch to avoid uneconomic investment in that direction.

Since the big increases in coal and oil prices our standard of living had been maintained only by foreign loans, and 5p of every £ in our wage packets came from this source. The avoidance of waste, and the optimum use of resources, were essential if we were to re-establish our standard of living on a sound economic basis.

Mr. Dodds warned that if we failed to bring inflation under control we would be unable to export our manufactured goods to pay for our raw materials, and this could lead to “an economic catastrophe, with massive unemployment and a subsistence standard of living.”

Mr. W. F. Cusworth, Director General of the CEGB’s North Western Region, reporting on behalf of the Region, stressed the need to “concentrate on efficiency, to cut away any fat and to get down to a clean, lean, hungry organisation.”

Referring to proposed power station closures, Mr. Cusworth said:

“I don’t want to minimise these, but we must get them in perspective. We have been closing power stations for many years, and every year we have closed down two or three stations. This year we have accelerated the process.”

He added that the proposed closures were “a very necessary piece of surgery” which would be relatively painless. Agreement over the processes to be adopted had been reached, and no redundancies were going to be pushed on to people.

Thermal efficiency for the Region and throughout the country had improved, resulting in the saving of nine million tons of fuel, worth £130 million. The Region was building three new power stations—at Heysham, Ince, and Dinorwic, with the result that the Region’s output would increase. He forecast that Dinorwic was destined to become a major tourist attraction.



Pictures on this page show some of the delegates to the Conference.

The delegates were welcomed to Capenhurst by Dr. A. T. Churchman, Director of the Research Centre.

Dr. Churchman said that by the year 2,000 there would be two alternatives—either we would be moving towards a much less energy-intensive society, in the Western world at least, or we would be well on the way to an all-electric society because there would be no other source of energy.

Included in the day's programme were syndicate discussions. Delegates split into six groups discussing a number of topics which have been the subject of research at Capenhurst—"Minimum Resource Buildings," "Metal Melting," "Communications," "Drying Processes in Industry," "Re-cycling Materials," and "Lightning Protection." Syndicate leaders presented reports on the deliberations and conclusions of the groups.





THE ECONOMIC SITUATION AND THE OUTLOOK FOR MANWEB

— *The Chairman Comments*

These comments represent the substance of a statement made to the District Joint Advisory Council on 22nd October 1975.

FOR THE first time since the end of the second world war we are selling less electricity than in the previous year. For the six months April to September 1975 MANWEB's electricity sales were 6.8% lower than in the same period of last year.

This drop in electricity sales is mainly due to a reduction in demand by industry. It reflects the extent to which Britain's economic situation has deteriorated. Increased electricity prices and the Government's energy conservation campaign have also affected electricity sales to domestic and commercial customers.

The regeneration of industry depends on the success of the Government's campaign to control inflation, and the creation of a climate in which investment in new industrial plant can take place. We cannot expect to see our high historical rate of growth repeated for some years to come.

The electricity supply industry cannot be isolated from the state of the national economy as a whole and the general conditions prevailing are having repercussions on our industry, both nationally and throughout the MANWEB area.

MANWEB's workload has declined significantly.

Capital investment is running at a lower level than in recent years, due to reduced demand.

Our turnover in appliance sales, contracting and servicing work is also significantly reduced.

No early re-expansion is likely, and it is essential for Area Boards to bring their resources into line with the lower level of demand.

In this situation the possibility of involuntary redundancy cannot be excluded, but it is the object of the Board to avoid this if at all possible. Up to now, action taken has been confined to limiting the replacement of employees who leave, and to a significant reduction in the volume of work given to contractors. There has been a certain measure of re-deployment of people from spheres of activity where workload has fallen to other spheres which are still viable. In certain cases this has involved the re-training of the people concerned.

The total number of employees has already been reduced in these ways, and the process will continue. Other measures, such as early retirement, may need to be contemplated as the situation develops. Trade Unions will be kept in touch with the situation as it becomes clearer.

It seems probable that the measures already introduced—which require full co-operation from Trade Unions and employees—will be sufficient to forestall the need for further action, at all events until the end of March.

I hope—although no complete assurance can be given—that they will be sufficient for a much longer period.

Denis Jones.



Find the overhead line. By looking closely at this picture you will be able to pick out MANWEB's new "low profile" 132 kV overhead line mounted on the Trident II pole. When this picture was taken the line was new and the aluminium stood out in the sunlight, but when it has weathered, the line will be even more difficult to see.

"Low profile" overhead line sets new standards

MANWEB DESIGN FIRST IN BRITAIN

A NEW "low profile" 132,000-volt overhead line designed by MANWEB is likely to set new standards for such lines, not only in our area but throughout the Country and probably much further afield. The first permanent operational line of this new design erected in Britain is an eight kilometre section to supply the Shell oil site at Rhosgoch, Anglesey.

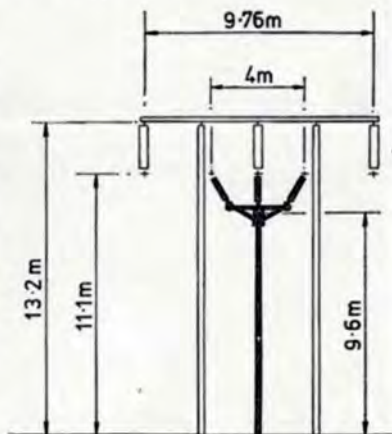
The new design, known as "Trident II," is the work of Mr. Mike Hughes, of the Head Office Plant and Equipment Section.

It is based on a single wood pole, average height 12 metres, in place of the more expensive and complex designs previously employed. The result is an overhead line which is much less obtrusive, an especially important point in areas of natural beauty, and also a good deal more economic.

This new concept in 132-kV lines has been made possible by the recently developed TDL Polymeric line post insulators, which have a strength to weight ratio approximately three times that of traditional porcelain insulators. As a result it is no longer

necessary for the conductors to be suspended, but can now be supported from below. The use of fixed post insulators reduces the conductor spacing requirements, as no allowance need be made for insulator swing. This feature in itself allows the construction to be based on single poles instead of "H" pole Portal structures with the appropriate overall reduction in support sizes.

Here we see the difference in height and width of the old "H" pole Portal structure with its suspended conductors and the new Trident single pole with its conductors supported from below.



The new idea has, however, posed problems as well as solving some and new techniques have had to be worked out by the close collaboration between the Plant & Equipment Section and the Construction Department's Special Projects team, led by Mr. Geoff Price.

The use of post insulators of a completely new design created difficulties in providing conductor running facilities and conductor clamping arrangements. Both these difficulties were resolved by the provision of equipment and materials specifically designed for the purpose. However, not least of the problems was the provision of a safe working arrangement for the linesmen at the line end of the insulators. The traditional linesman's belt was rendered ineffective by the way in which the insulators are inclined away from the cross-arm ends, making it impossible for him to be supported by his safety belt when working.

The solution was to provide a rope enclosure across the insulator ends. The materials used for this purpose came from equipment developed by the rock climbing fraternity, who are specialists in making themselves safe in near impossible situations.

MANWEB site engineer, Ken Jones, paid a visit to Joe Brown's Climbing Shop in Llanberis, and came away with an assortment of nylon rope and "karabiners"—metal spring clips—etc., which were soon improvised into an effective safety harness enabling linesmen to work effectively, with proper protection when leaning out in space at the ends of the crossarms.

An improved method of "conductor sagging" was also developed with a new procedure for landing the conductor and insulators which was able to take advantage of the new type insulator's light weight. Ken is now of the opinion that the new design can be erected as easily as can the 33,000-volt overhead lines.

Without doubt the new design is another notable MANWEB "first," helping to preserve the beauty of the countryside, and at the same time saving money. Great interest has been shown by other Area Boards which have sent representatives to see the new project for themselves.



Inside a safety rope enclosure, the linesman demonstrates the ease of working on the line end of one of the outside insulators. Below, without crash helmets as this was a posed-for picture, are Messrs. Mike Hughes, Arthur Perry (Asst. Chief Engineer, Construction), Des Wallin (Murphy's), Ken Jones and Geoff Price.

VISITORS TO RHOSGOCH

Many engineers from other Boards have already visited the site of the new overhead line at Rhosgoch and below we see specialists with some of our own staff including Messrs. M. A. Garrett (Asst. Chief Engineer, Plant and Equipment), fifth from right, and T. H. Garmory (Principal Engineer), extreme right. Our visitors were very impressed with the engineering of this line both in design and construction.





The light-hearted and the serious at Dee Valley District staff conference. *Left*—Joe Mercer tells a behind-the-changing-room-door football yarn. *Right*—the Chairman spells out the hard facts of the economic situation.

DEE VALLEY STAFF CONFERENCE

“We are still immensely strong”

—Chairman

THE RELATIVE strength of the electricity supply industry in the present adverse economic situation was stressed by the Chairman of the Board, Mr. Denis Dodds, when speaking to Dee Valley District's annual staff conference, held at Deeside Leisure Centre, Queensferry, last month.

“Even though we are a little weaker than we were we are still immensely strong as an industry, and whatever the ‘hiccups’ on the way through the future for this industry is unavoidably essential to the nation” said the Chairman.

“The time will come when the supply of natural gas and oil will be running out. We are looking to the time when nuclear electricity will be the only inexhaustible source of fuel left.” he added.

The staff conference produced what must surely be a record attendance figure, with something like 340 acceptances.

The Chairman told the gathering that our industry was going through a difficult time at present. For the first time in living experience we were selling less electricity than we were two years ago. No industry could isolate itself from the economic situation prevailing in this country and in the whole of the Western world, and our resources had to be brought into line with demand.

The most important element in any conservation campaign was to avoid the waste of resources of any kind, added the Chairman. He went on to make reference to the fact that the generating stations

Below, and next page, sections of the massive turnout at the Deeside Leisure Centre.





faceted with closure were older and less efficient units.

Guest speaker for the evening was soccer personality Mr. Joe Mercer, one-time player for Everton and Arsenal and later manager in turn for Sheffield United, Aston Villa, Manchester City and Coventry City.

Most of Joe's talk was devoted to a stream of soccer jokes and anecdotes which offered plenty of appeal to his predominantly-male audience, but he did have some serious words to say about the game as well.

"Football today has developed into a world game. Whether it is a better spectacle to watch is debatable," he said.

"We have got to condition the game somehow or other to make it more attractive for people to watch. The game is about goals. Some countries want to play the game full out for 90 minutes, while

others want to play for 60 minutes and then to play it square and waste time. It is important that everything possible should be done to make the game enjoyable for the spectator," he added.

The guests were welcomed to the conference by Group Manager Mr. K. Helliwell, who referred to the sad absence of the late Mr. Eifion Jones, former secretary of the LAC and also late Chairman of the Alyn and Deeside District Council, much involved in the construction of the building in which the conference was staged. His successor as LAC secretary, Mr. Keith Griffiths, reported on the year's working, and an Open Forum session—relatively quiet for so large an audience—rounded off the formal side of the proceedings.

The informal side consisted of an enjoyable dinner, and an evening's dancing to Mr. Norman Kenyon's "disco."

Obituary

It is with deep regret that we report the deaths of several of our former colleagues. We extend sincere sympathy to families and friends.

Mr. M. Anderson, formerly an engineering clerk with Mid-Cheshire District, joined the electricity industry from school and served 37 years before his early retirement in July 1973, on grounds of ill health. He was 53.

Mr. L. Carson, who was 73, retired from the Board in 1967 after 49 years in the industry. He started his career with the Liverpool Electric Supply Department working in the city's power stations. During the war he was involved with restoring bomb-damaged substations and was

commended for his work.

After nationalisation he joined the former Liverpool North District staff. Lance was a very keen member of the MANWEB Pensioner's Club.

Mr. N. Litherth, aged 58, was a meter mechanic in the Meter Test Department at Lister Drive. He had been ill for some time. He was with MANWEB for 26 years and played an active part in the welfare of the department and was a shop steward for many years.

Norman was a member of the St. John's Ambulance Brigade for 35 years and used his knowledge of first-aid to help many of his colleagues at times of injury and illness.

Mr. W. McDonald aged 65, who was an electrician in the

former Conway Valley District until his retirement through ill health in 1967. He was a keen member of the sports and social club, helping at social functions, and played an active part in the Board's joint consultation machinery, being a member of the local Works Committee.

Mr. G. H. Preece, aged 80, died at Cophthorne Hospital, Shrewsbury earlier this month.

Until his retirement, George worked for the Board's Construction Department at Welshpool.

Mr. N. Pritchard, retired in 1974 after being in the industry for 35 years. Nat was 66 and prior to his retirement was a switchboard attendant at Crewe Grid Station.

Talking Notes

HOOVER CONTEST

WINNER of the first prize in the recent Product Knowledge Competition organised jointly by MANWEB and Hoover Ltd. was **Evadne Trask** from our Wrexham shop.

The finalists in the contest were selected by the Hoover field force for their knowledge of two major Hoover appliances, the washing machine and the vacuum cleaner.

Each competitor had to 'sell' these two items to a 'customer' who happened to be **John Trottmann**, the Hoover/MANWEB liaison man. He, along with **Stewart Griffiths**, our Deputy Marketing Manager,

judged the ladies on their sales presentation and product knowledge.

Evadne, who has been with us for the past five years, won a Hoover cleaner for her skills. In second place was **Elsie Webster** from Old Swan shop, and third was **Elizabeth Duffy** from Welshpool shop. **Pam Allen**, a sales representative from our Chester shop was

Competitors and judges at the final round of the MANWEB/Hoover sales presentation. From left to right: Messrs. J. Trottmann and S. G. Griffiths with Pam Allen, Evadne Trask, Elsie Webster and Elizabeth Duffy.



pipped for a place in the final by the eventual winner.

Odd Snack!

Odd things sometimes happen to records draughtsmen when carrying out their tasks "on site." Such a thing happened to **Jim Bell** from our North Mersey District.

Commencing a survey of a new overhead line in the High-town area, he had just set out his new 30 metre tape when his attention was drawn to a railwayman calling from the nearby railway track.

"Have you seen a cow on the line?" queried the harassed looking employee of British Rail.

"No" was the reply.

"In that case I can get the trains moving again" answered the relieved looking official.

Jim's puzzled expression turned to one of amazement when he returned to his task. There was his brand new tape lying on the ground in two pieces with one metre missing, and two cows chewing the remainder!

Jim swears he heard one cow say to the other "I have never had such good measure!" His reply is unprintable—but the air in the area turned to a peculiar shade of blue!

Study Prize Awards

Awards under the Study Prize Scheme, have been made to the following:

Senior Awards (value £40)—**Messrs. D. Hughes** (Prin. Asst., Revenue, Head Office) and

A. L. Reid (3rd engineer, Gwynedd).

Junior Awards (value £20)—**Messrs. P. J. Brownhill** (junior Admin. trainee, Head Office), **K. T. Murray** and **W. Peet** (apprentice electricians, Dee Valley and Mid-Mersey), **R. Connor**, **P. Currie**, **L. M. Parr** and **P. Watson** (student engineers, E & T, Head Office).

Another Silver Salver

On his recent retirement from his post as a leading fireman in the Retained Fire Service in the city of Chester, **Mr. Eric Bennion** was presented with a silver salver to mark



Eric Bennion, right, receives his silver salver from Divisional Officer **N. Lightbody**, Commander of the Chester area.

the end of nearly 40 year's service.

Eric, a foreman fitter mechanic in our Dee Valley District, was presented with his first silver salver in 1972 as a gesture from the Board in recognition of his award of the British Empire Medal.

He joined the electricity supply industry as an apprentice fitter with Chester Corporation in 1937. In the same year he followed in his father's and grandfather's footsteps and joined the Chester Fire Service on the Retained list.

In addition to his B.E.M., Eric also has the Queen's Medal for duty in the Fire Service and two or three 'gongs' gained during his war service with the Royal Navy.

Royal Command

Seven men from MANWEB plus some retired employees were on stage at the London Palladium for this year's Royal Command Performance, along with the famous names from show biz.

Compere Bruce Forsyth had difficulty in pronouncing the name of the 100 voice choir to which our men from MANWEB belong, The Rhosllaner-crugog Male Voice Choir. Even shortening the title to Rhos had him foxed, he said 'Ross,' finally he got the abbreviation right by saying Rhos as in roast beef!

"What a sound you boys make, baby," Telly 'Kojak' Savalas commented on hearing the Choir render 'Soldiers Chorus' from Faust.

Harry Secombe when introduced to the audience by the choir's conductor, claimed to know each member personally, turning to the choir he said, "Hello Dai Jones."

"Hello Harry," came back the reply from a hundred voices!

The choir accompanied him and then Vera Lynn and finally backed Vera and Harry in their duet 'Rose of England.'

We hope to feature more about the choir in next month's 'Contact.'

"Girl from MANWEB" Weds

Our sincere congratulations and good wishes for a happy future go to **Lesley Taylor**, last year's "Girl from MANWEB" who recently married Mr. Peter S. Williams at Conwy Registry Office.

Lesley, until a few weeks ago our Clwyd District demonstrator, has now gone to live in Solihull, Birmingham, where husband Peter, an electrical engineer, works in the family business.

And so, another of our "Girls



Peter and Lesley—Mr. and Mrs. Williams.

from MANWEB" settles down to wedded bliss after a hectic year in office.

New Educational Films

Two new films, "Discovering Electricity" and "What is Electricity?" provide an exciting introduction to its study by eleven to fourteen year olds. They are the latest additions to the Electricity Council's *Understanding Electricity* series of educational films.

Dr. Trevor Churchman, Director of the Electricity Council's Research Centre at Capenhurst in Cheshire, is featured in both films giving illustrated talks to children at the Royal Institution in London, where Michael Faraday began his research into the relationship between electricity and magnetism in 1820.

"Discovering Electricity" (40 minutes) traces the story of electricity from the ancient Greeks, who rubbed amber (Gk: *elektron*) with silk and produced static electricity, to experiments by Gilbert, Frank-

lin, Ampere, Volta and the discoveries of Faraday.

In "What is Electricity?" (28 minutes) Dr. Churchman illustrates his talk with some of Faraday's own books and experimental apparatus and the help of children from Oxhey Wood Junior School, Hertfordshire. A two-part black and white film of the same name, made by the electricity supply industry in 1949, was withdrawn in 1973.

Both films, in 16 mm colour with optical sound will be available on free loan from the Electricity Council Film Library (TB), 30 Millbank, London SW1P 4RD.

Winning Haymaker

The winner of the MANWEB heat of the Electricity Council sponsored Barn Hay Drying contest, Mr. E. Royle, was placed second nationally.

Mr. Royle farms 49 acres at his Blakely Farm, Mobberly, Cheshire. He has 43 milking cows and 27 heifers. His milk yield last winter averaged 1,200 gallons.

Much of the credit for his high yield and large stocking ratio he gives to the fact he

manages to produce 75 tons of barn dried hay in his dutch barn type dryer installation now ten years old.

Last year's MANWEB winner also was placed second nationally, and he was Mr. E. D. Hughes of Pwllheli, who finished second to Mr. Royle this year in the MANWEB heat.

In all Mr. Royle picked up £75 in prize money for his bales of hay.

The New Electron Players

Following their very successful presentation "Spring and Port Wine" earlier this year, rehearsals are now well under way for the "Electron's" next show, "I'll Get My Man," a hilarious farce by Philip King.

Playing a leading part is our Lister Drive thespian, **Sid Costin**, who once again is producing the play. Other members of the cast, who also played in the first production, are **Muriel Barnes, Pat Flanagan, Eva Kirkwood, Kathy Norton and Tom Saladine**. They are joined by newcomers to the Electron Players, **Mary Johnston, Eileen Smallwood and Danny McGill**.

The show goes on at the Neptune Theatre, Liverpool on Friday and Saturday 5th and 6th December at 7.30 p.m. Tickets at 50p (O.A.P's. 30p) are now available from Vicky Roberts, Liverpool District. Tel 722.

Paris Holiday

Still suffering from post-holiday depression after spend-



Three girls in Versailles, Gwen, Liz and Andrea.

ing a glorious week in Paris are a trio of our girls from North Wirral District, **Andrea Cowan, Liz Cullan and Gwen Hickman**.

All three work in the Amendments section at Craven Street and all three are single. Maybe there are some 'hunky men' around to help them out of their depression.

Twenty-One

Over 30 friends from MANWEB helped **Christine Rodgers** from North Wirral Work Control section celebrate her 21st birthday last month.

A great time was had by all at a special 'Oliver Twist' night at the Wiggin Tree restaurant.

Hot foot!

A chase through the streets of Crewe, ending in the arrest of a youth, followed a purse-snatching incident at our Crewe shop a few weeks ago.

Demonstrator **Jane Fairclough**, of Liverpool, who was doing a stint at the Crewe shop at the time, left her purse in the staff room at the shop, and later found a youth helping himself to it.

Winner of the MANWEB regional heat in the national Barn Hay Drying contest, Mr. E. Royle, receives his award from Mr. W. N. Shires (Deputy Chief Commercial Officer), right. Joining them in the picture are Mrs. Royle and Mr. G. Pritchard of the National Farmers' Union.



Together with an accomplice he ran off, and the two were later seen rifling the purse nearby. The police were called, and Jane, together with **Mrs. Gladys Davies** and **Mr. John Bostock** set off in pursuit.

The two were stopped and proclaimed their innocence, but as they were being taken back to the shop they made a break for it, pursued by John. With the help of a policewoman and a passer-by, who 'had a go,' one of them was held and later charged.

Jane's purse was recovered—even if it hadn't been, the grabbers would have had a poor haul. For Jane has two purses, one for money and one for timetables and tickets. The villains of the piece only got the timetables and tickets!

Songsters

At the recent Clwyd District Employees' conference, our roving reporter came across a trio of vocalists from the *Cor Meibion Maelgwn (Maelgwn Male Voice Choir)*.

The men in harmony are Messrs. **George Cooksley**, Clwyd District's Administrative Officer, **Norman Humphries**, a transport supervisor at Legacy and **Bob Jones**, a former linesman who was based at Llandudno Junction depot for 20 years.

Back on the Beat

Constable Beacon has made a full recovery from his recent accident in which he received a fractured skull. He fell off the back of a lorry and thanks to the dedicated 'surgeons' at our Queensferry 'Hospital' he has had a head transplant.

Constable Bobby Beacon you see is not exactly your flesh and blood type policeman, but a walking, talking electronic

belisha beacon.

He was conceived by Inspector Brian Jackson of the Cheshire Constabulary in 1970, and built in the former MANWEB test laboratory, Pumpfields, Liverpool, by MANWEB apprentices under the supervision of Messrs. **Tom Owen** and **Harry Sharples**.

After four years on the road teaching thousands of youngsters how to use the highways safely, he was returned for an overhaul.

The test laboratory, now at Queensferry, have checked the

electronics, given him a new head, new-type lips which move when his operator speaks and put him back on his feet—sorry—wheels again. The man responsible for the 'operation' is test lab. electrician **Phil Swift**.

He has spent much of his spare time, lunch hours and tea breaks, etc., carrying out the work. Lending a hand were the 'consultants' who assisted at his 'birth,' Tom Owen and Harry Sharples.

So, fully recuperated, Bobby Beacon goes back to his beat of

Out on the job again soon after his recent operation at our Queensferry 'Hospital' is the ever popular Bobby Beacon, seen here chatting to children at the Chester Road Safety Rally and Exhibition.



schools, garden fetes and safety exhibitions, with his colleagues of Cheshire Police.

Hole in One

Our congratulations go to **Gren Roberts** of Head Office Welfare Section who succeeded in holing out in one at the 180 yard, par three 17th on his local, Wrexham golf course.

Gren is a 24 handicap player!

Bowls Tournament

Ten teams, some mixed, entered for this year's Liverpool District Bowls Tournament held at Thingwall Road.

The winning team, representing the meter readers, was captained by **Ernie Tupman** (foreman) who called on a number of his colleagues to play in the various rounds.

In the evening, everyone enjoyed a fish and chip supper followed by a disco dance run by **Ted Potter** (service engineer).

The Bowls Cup and draw prizes were presented by **Charles Donovan** (District Engineer).

Welsh Hospitals and Health Services Association

MINIMUM CONTRIBUTIONS DOUBLED

The WHA is currently considering the existing range of contributions and scales of benefits available to members and in particular, the lowest contribution of 5p per week.

In recent years, inflation has reduced the real value of the benefits applicable to this rate to such an extent that they are no longer realistic.

In the best interests of those members still contributing at the lowest rate, it has been decided to implement an automatic increase from 5p to 10p per week. All other members' subscription rates remain unaltered including the Concession Rate of 13p per month to retired pensioners.

The increase in the minimum subscription rates comes into effect on 1st January 1976.

FOR SALE

Garrard turntable. Type AT6, designed as record changer with completely automatic record selection, with special transcription pick-up arm for high quality reproduction on both automatic and manual play. Condition as new, ready mounted on motor board. With instruction manual. Price £12. Contact Mr. R. W. Jones, 24 Acton Gate, Wrexham, Clwyd.

Three bedroom semi in Victoria Road, Great Sankey, near Warrington. Lounge, living room, kitchen, gardens front and rear, gas central heating, carpets throughout, newly re-wired. Detached brick garage. Near to shops, etc. Ideally situated for Mid-Mersey District Office or Fiddlers Ferry power station. Price £7,650. 'Phone: Chester 44024 or 051-424 9274.

Saw attachment D984 for Black and Decker drill (recently purchased and unused). £3.50. Pair $\frac{3}{4}$ inch chrome plated bath taps (mitre tops) £4.50. 'Phone 051-625 6889.

EMPLOYEES' STAFF MEETINGS

Reports and pictures of the Local Advisory Committee staff meetings at Head Office and in the North Mersey, Liverpool, Clwyd, Gwynedd and Oswestry Districts will appear in the December issue of 'Contact'.

WANTED

Permanent site for 27 feet, six-berth caravan anywhere along the North Wales coast. Write: J. Perry, 37 Berwyn Avenue, Penyffordd, Near Chester.

AUTUMN DANCE AT BOOTLE

To help keep their members active and occupied, the North Mersey Sports and Social Club held an Autumn Dance at the Mons Hotel, Bootle a short time ago. This was very well supported by over 200 people and a great time was had by all judging by the photographs below.



UNIT 77 Town Square Runcorn



The first sale at the new shop was an electric fire with surround. To mark the occasion, the customer Mrs. Cannell from Castlefields, was presented with a decanter and set of glasses by Mr. Glyn Norbury (*District Commercial Engineer*), pictured above.

Mrs. Cannell told him that it would be her 50th wedding anniversary on Christmas Day and she would remember MANWEB when she had her celebration drink from her new glassware.



The busy scene at our new shop on opening day.

Successful Launch

The Board's new shop at Runcorn, designed by our Building Section at Head office, was successfully launched last month.

Business was excellent and on the first two days, a Friday and Saturday, turnover amounted to nearly £6,000, which included the sale of 21 cookers!

Right: Shop supervisor Julian Jenkins flanked by members of his staff, Jean Antrobus, left, and Brenda Molyneux.

Below: Sales staff Emily Kendrick and Marion Hughes busy with customers.





Mr. Jim Bird (*installation engineer*), left, chats with Messrs. M. R. Cowan and Peter Falcon (*seconded as District Administrative Officer*).



Board Chairman, Mr. D. G. Dodds, centre, flanked by Messrs. D. G. Hodgetts (*District Admin. Officer, Mid-Mersey*) and Harold Allman.

No. 6 L.A.C. EMPLOYEES' MEETING

Facing Facts at Mid-Cheshire

Guests from Head Office, Messrs. L. J. Scudamore (*Management Services Officer*), left, and K. S. Leach (*Deputy Chief Accountant*), centre, with Mr. Sam Knight a retired member of the District staff.



STAFF AT this year's Mid-Cheshire District Employees' Annual Meeting held at the Alvaston Hall, Nantwich a few weeks ago, were in a very businesslike but somewhat sombre mood. Many obviously realised that our industry was going through a very sticky patch and this truth was emphasised in talks given by Group Manager Mr. R. J. Barraclough and the guest speaker, Mr. M. R. Cowan (*Chief Commercial Officer*).

Even the questions in the 'Open Forum' session were far more interesting than usual showing that at all levels, staff were taking a constructive and critical look at the work they were doing.

Following the Group Manager's welcome to the 150 past and present members of the District staff and to the special guests attending the Conference, Mr. Harold Allman, as Secretary of the No. 6 Local Advisory Committee presented some highlights of the year's working. He covered safe driving and long service awards, apprentice training and pre-retirement courses, welfare matters and aspects of health and safety.

Then Mr. Barraclough spoke on some of the current problems facing us in the electricity supply industry. In commenting on the £258 million loss in the past financial year he pointed out that one of the main reasons for this was the terrific 70 per cent increase in fuel costs. "Our capital charges increased by £63 million," he went on, "and the rates we paid to Local Authorities increased by 50 per cent adding a further £32 million to our costs."

In bringing his facts and figures more close to home, Mr. Barraclough reminded his audience that we in MANWEB sustained a loss last year of some £17 million compared with £8 million the previous year. Increased fuel costs had added £41½ million to our costs with capital charges increased by £1.7 million and rates by well over £1 million.

He explained that through Government policy

electricity was being supplied at less than cost so much so that in MANWEB, our customers had been subsidised to the tune of £16 each during the year. With the Government now deciding not to underwrite any more losses, a dramatic increase in the price of electricity had to be introduced—with predictable reactions from our consumers.

Dealing with the problems associated with increased electricity accounts, Mr. Barraclough spoke of the difficult cases and those who got deeper and deeper into debt. He said that an efficient disconnection system tempered with sympathy was merited.

Also of great help to a lot of people would be the Board's new 50 pence savings stamp and the recently introduced Thrift Meter would help alleviate the problem of full prepayment boxes.

He went on to speak of employment prospects and said that circumstances were changing so rapidly that what we think today may look foolish in six months time.

"Despite the gloomy situation," he concluded, "we must continue to believe in ourselves for we are fortunate in being in an important industry. We must be civil and courteous to all our customers who, for the supply of electricity cannot go elsewhere, but who can do so for goods and services."

Mr. Barraclough then introduced the guest speaker Mr. Cowan who opened his remarks with a brief resume of the Board's Commercial outlook, which regardless of the gloomy attitude of many people today, was about confidence in the future, in investment, in selling and in our jobs.

He spoke of the difficulties faced in forecasting seven years ahead—for power station requirements—and one year ahead—to establish our tariff format. "When planning so far ahead," he remarked, "you cannot foresee major calamities like the coal miners strike or the oil crisis or world recession."

Emphasising that industry was the key to our



Plenty of liquid refreshment in the hands of Nora McGowan, escorted here by pensioners Sam Knight, left, and Percy Booth.

economic future, Mr. Cowan went on to explain why we first looked to industry when making our forecasts. "If industry is buoyant, we are buoyant," he said.

"We have been too confident in forecasting increases in the sales of electricity," he confessed, "and the trend at the moment is rather ominous."

This brought him to say a few words on the reasons for the recent very necessary electricity price increases. He insisted that "Electricity is still a bargain. Other prices go up little by little, every week, every month, but we only consider tariff changes every twelve months and therefore our increases appear to be much larger than other price rises even when this is not the case."

Mr. Cowan went on to say that he thought the outlook was certainly serious, not just for MANWEB but for the whole country. "But the public at large are not conscious of the true seriousness.

"The £6-a-week pay policy is not the solution. It means the continuation of inflation and it came at least a year too late. The pound continues to fall and we have to pay more for our imports. Some

A trio from Mid-Cheshire Admin. work control section, from left to right: Linda Edwards, Muriel Holmes and Jean Harris.



Our cameraman catches Messrs. Eric Stock (Stores), left, and Cliff Young (chargehand linesman).



industries may fail and others will require less people and this means that our customer's spending power will be less."

To get ourselves out of the 'Slough of Despond,' Mr. Cowan urged that each Company should go all out to sell their products and that we too in MANWEB should be doing this. "We cannot stop inflation by ourselves," he said, "but we can control our own costs. We all need to be cost conscious and sales conscious."

"Commercial catering is booming," he continued, "and in the domestic field we can all help. If anyone complains about a bill, don't just agree it's high, ask how it compares with the price increase of newspapers, of milk, meat and bread. Tell them that they don't notice these things going up a penny a time, but it happens several times a year and in some cases every month. We have only to put our prices up once a year so it's more noticeable."

Mr. Cowan went on to say that electric central heating is still a good buy at one penny a unit less than the normal general tariff cost of domestic electricity.

He urged his audience to send people to MANWEB. "Tell people it's time to rewire. We need their money. We need every sale we can get if we are to minimise the effect of inflation on us."

"We must be proud of electricity and believe in it," he concluded. "The Commercial outlook will be good as long as we can convince the public of the truth of our current slogan . . . MANWEB electricity does so much for you."

Following this inspiring talk, Mr. Denis Dodds (Chairman) rose to say a few words. He endorsed the account of our stewardship given by Mr. Barraclough and Mr. Cowan. He said that the employees' meetings were very important for they enabled staff to get a general picture of what was going on outside their own particular jobs.

"We as an industry are in a most serious situation," he went on. "How history will write us up

in the future, I just don't know."

He said that we had to keep our costs under control and he hoped that those who supplied us—like the Coal Board—could hold their costs. "We cannot isolate our industry from the rest of the community, but we can help to cushion the effect of inflation."

Turning to energy conservation, Mr. Dodds spoke on the need to save on overall sources and for the selective marketing of electricity. He pointed out that the Board's Head Office in Chester was a fine example of the efficient use of energy. He then brought his brief remarks to a close by quoting from a former Energy Minister, Mr. Eric Varley, when he said:

"It is dangerous saving energy if the savings involve a greater expenditure of other resources. The most efficient use of all resources require a proper balance of one resource against another. This is primarily what I am talking about when I use the term 'energy conservation'—the more efficient use of energy. We are not seeking austerity for austerity sake. There is no question of asking anyone to go without energy if he is prepared to meet the full cost of his consumption . . . What we are asking is that people should cut down their own fuel bills by adopting some of the many ways open to them and making better use of energy."

Following on Mr. Dodds' comments came the 'Open Forum' session with a number of interesting questions answered, in the main, by the Mid-Cheshire District Officers.

One particular question concerning our expenditure on advertising during these difficult times was answered by Mr. Cowan who pointed out that sales and employment prospects were related and instanced as a specific example the 'Time to Rewire' campaign which had been designed to attract work for the contracting section. He emphasised that all our advertising, direct or indirect, was well planned, necessary and effective.



Left: In happy mood, Mr. Sam Jones (retired) and Pam Johnson of the District Commercial department.

Right: Mr. Brian Taylor (meter reader), left, with two former members of Mid-Cheshire staff, Messrs. Alec Knott and Ted Leighton.



RETIREMENTS

Mr. A. E. JAGGER

Two and a half million MANWEB meters certified as accurate and fit for their job—that is the mind-boggling record of Mr. A. E. Jagger, the Department of Energy's meter examiner for MANWEB, who has just retired after 28 years' service to our Board.

Mr. Jagger began his career with meter manufacturers and later became Meter Engineer with Sale Corporation. While he was Meter Superintendent at Alderley Edge and Wilmslow Testing Station nationalisation came along, and Mr. Jagger found himself part of the North Western Board.

Soon afterwards he joined the Ministry of Fuel and Power as a Meter Examiner, and in this capacity visited most of our Testing Stations to certify our meters and approve our testing instruments.

His contribution to the efficiency of the MANWEB organisation was recognised at an informal ceremony at Lister Drive, Liverpool, when he was presented with some gardening tools. Those who have benefited from his co-operation and his wealth of experience over the years wish a long and happy retirement to Mr. Jagger and his wife.

Mr. L. SEFTON

After nearly 50 years' service in the electricity supply industry, Mr. Leslie Sefton, a foreman in the Dee Valley District engineering department, retired a few weeks ago.

He started work as an apprentice electrician with the Mersey Power Company in September 1926 and at the age of 19 years, he took the opportunity to train as a jointer on a B.I. Cable course.

Later, when he was working on 33kV cables, he was probably the first electricity board e.h.v. jointer in the locality.

When he received his promotion to foreman he worked in the Runcorn/Widnes area and soon after Vesting Day in 1948, he moved over to Ellesmere Port just as the area started to grow. Later, when the Port became part of the former Chester District Leslie moved to New Crane Street, where he was well and truly welcomed.

Senior engineers were always ready to pay tribute to his initiative and his capacity for work. He always got the supply on and he was never shy of handling a spade himself. He always spoke his mind and got on with the job which to him was all important.

Unfortunately, during the last two or three years, Leslie's health has not been too good. But with his choice of an electric drill and attachments as his parting gift from his colleagues, he obviously intends to get through a lot of work in his days of retirement.

The presentation was made to him by Mr. E. T. Peters (*District Engineer*) who echoed the wish of Leslie's many friends that he should enjoy a long retirement with improved health.

Mrs. J. HOPLEY

After 26 years' service with MANWEB, Mrs. Jean Hopley, a telephone switchboard operator at Mid-Mersey District's depot office at Roche, Runcorn, retired early on health grounds on October 31st.

Jean began as a general clerk in 1949, was temporarily regraded to senior clerical assistant on re-organisation in 1970, and since 1971 has been mainly engaged in telephone switchboard duties. During her years at Runcorn Jean's cheerful manner has endeared her to one and all, and her many friends join in wishing her a long and happy retirement.

She has a married son with his own joinery business in Yorkshire, and Jean proudly recounts that last month he received a coveted Design Award from H.R.H. the Duke of Gloucester.

On behalf of her friends Jean was presented with a cheque by Mr. D. Hodgetts (*D.A.O.*).

Mr. G. JONES

Starting work with the North Wales Power Company at Newtown in 1933 as an apprentice electrician, Mr. Gwyd Jones stayed until 1939 when he went to work at Thorntons of Wrexham.

Twelve months later he rejoined the N.W.P.Co. back at Newtown as an installation inspector, the post he held until his recent retirement.

Gwyd has been actively involved over the years in political, trade union and sporting activities. He is a past member of the Newtown Town Council and a member and past Chairman of the Trades Council. He has represented his MANWEB colleagues as a shop steward for the past 35 years.

His favourite sporting interest is the Newtown Football Club and he has held a variety of posts with them and is at present the President of the Supporters Club.

We are also advised that he is a most able choir conductor, usually showing this talent at the close of the District's annual staff meetings.

At his farewell presentation—on his last day at work which was also his 65th birthday—held at the Grapes Hotel in Newtown, premises which he wired way back, Mr. John Holywell, on behalf of Gwyd's many friends and colleagues, presented him with their farewell gifts of a power drill and a convector heater.

We join with them all in wishing Gwyd many happy years of healthy retirement.

MID-CHESHIRE RETIRED GROUP

After a very busy and enjoyable first year, former colleagues now banded together in the MANWEB Mid-Cheshire Retired Employees' Association are now planning an even more enterprising 1976.

The Association now numbers 57 members, and all retired MANWEB employees in the Mid-Cheshire area are invited to a meeting to be held at **Macon Way, Crewe, at 2.30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 9th**, to take part in planning the year's programme.

The past year has seen outings to Ness Gardens, to Head Office at Chester, to Thingwall Road, Liverpool, as guests of the Liverpool Retired Employees group, to Weston Park, Shifnal (home of the Earl and Countess of Bladford) and to Tatton Park. The Association's Annual Dinner was attended by 64 people.

While next year's programme remains to be worked out, the Annual Lunch has been provisionally fixed for March 10th at a Crewe hotel.

Chairman of the Association is **Mr. C. P. Booth** (Tel. Northwich 76850), and the Secretary is **Mr. T. V. Walley**, of Clyde Cottage, Swanley Lane, Nantwich. They will be delighted to hear from any more MANWEB pensioners who would like to "keep in touch" and to give further strength to an already-flourishing Association.

Christmas Dinners

for Retired Groups

Liverpool—Tuesday, December 2nd at 2.30 pm
at Thingwall Road Clubhouse.

Dee Valley—Tuesday, December 9th at 6 p.m.
at the Rhostyllen Canteen.

Clwyd—Tuesday, December 9th at 6 p.m.
at Cefndy Road Restaurant.

SUPERANNUATION SCHEMES

The 26th Annual General Meeting of members of the Staff Scheme will be held at the offices of the Electricity Council, 30 Millbank, London, on Tuesday, 9th December 1975 at 2.30 p.m.

Copies of the Minutes of the 25th Annual General Meeting are now available to all members of the Scheme (including pensioners) on request.

The Report and Accounts of both the Staff and Manual Workers' Schemes will shortly be available and will be displayed on notice boards. Individual copies will be sent to members on request.

For copies of any or all of these publications, please write to the Assistant Secretary (Personnel), MANWEB Head Office, Sealand Road, Chester. CHI 4LR, stating clearly your requirements.

Don't forget to add your own name and address.

CLWYD GROUP VISIT HEAD OFFICE

Pictured below are some members of the Clwyd District Retired Group with their wives on their recent visit to Head Office where they toured the building and enjoyed some refreshments. Two members of the Group, one ex-MANWEB and the other ex-Midlands Electricity Board, served in the RAF together and after a 30 years break, met again on this visit.

The Group, formed last July, now boasts nearly 150 members. They have a Christmas Dinner and Social arranged (see panel above).

All former members of the electricity supply industry who now live in the Clwyd District may apply for membership in the Group by writing to, or telephoning Mr. F. L. Evans, 11 Earl Road, Mold. (Mold 3241).

