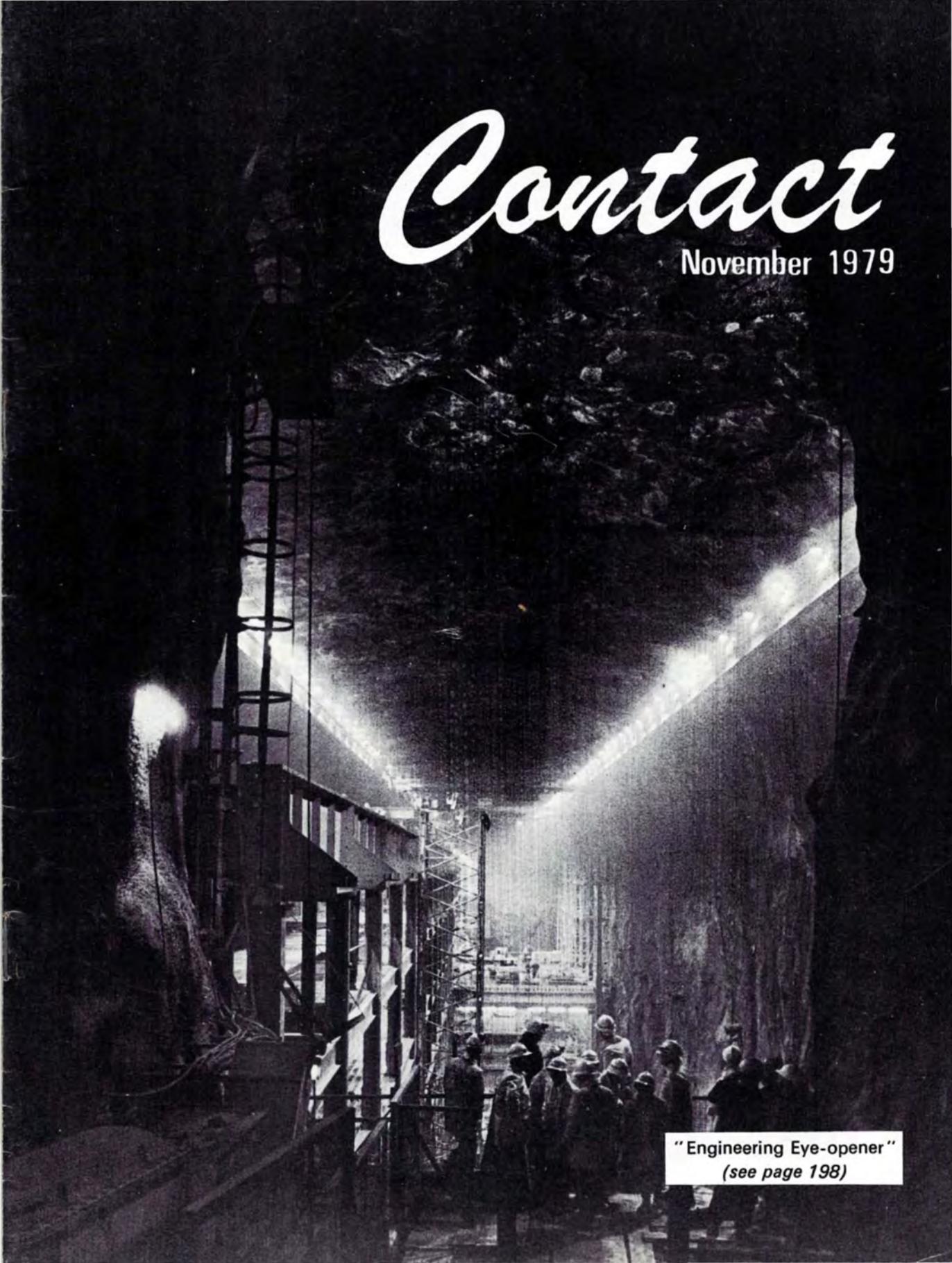


# Contact

November 1979



"Engineering Eye-opener"  
(see page 198)



## CHIEF ENGINEERS' CONFERENCE

Senior engineers from the electricity industry gathered at MANWEB's Head Office recently for a conference. Our picture shows, from left to right, seated: Mrs. G. Babbs (Secretary's Department E.C.), Messrs. W. Kerse (SEEB), L. Williams (SWEB), J. M. Caldwell (North of Scotland H.-E. Board), J. Addison and D. V. Ford (Electricity Council). Standing: Messrs. A. Wild (NEEB), E. G. Hooper (Electricity Council), J. Mellwaine (Northern Ireland Electricity Service), R. M. Gove (South of Scotland E.B.), D. R. Pardy (MEB), P. M. Prior (South Wales E.B.) and J. E. H. Cole (LEB), Dr. T. Broom (CEGB), Mr. W. Waring (EMEB), Dr. P. R. Howard (CEGB), Messrs. F. Manners (CEGB), J. Harris (NORWEB), A. R. Willis (EEB), J. Fisher (MANWEB), R. D. Roper (Electricity Council), H. C. Mortimer (YEB), J. S. Ekbery (SEB) and M. J. K. Marriott (Secretary's Department E.C.).

OUR COVER PICTURE shows some of our engineering guests on their tour of the site at the Dinorwic Pumped Storage Scheme.

Picture by Mike Hall

## ENGINEERING SEMINARS 1979

In five separate seminars held at Head Office, a packed programme over two-day periods was presented to nearly 400 engineering members of our staff.



Above: One of the 'Open Forum' panels in session at the conclusion of a seminar. From left to right: Messrs. Richard Owen (Oswestry District Engineer), John Parry (Dee Valley District Engineer), Fred Brooker (Asst. Chief Engineer—Technical), Gerry

Haughan (Deputy Chief Engineer), Dennis Farquhar (Asst. Chief Engineer—System Management) and Stan Roberts (Asst. Chief Engineer—Plant and Construction). Chief Engineer Mr. Jim Fisher introduced and closed each seminar and other speakers included Dr. Charles Lynch (1st engineer) and Messrs. Geoff Abel (Corporate Development Officer) and John Thompson (Commercial Economist).

Left: Mr. Mike Hughes (senior engineer) poses a question during an 'Open Forum' session.



# Contact

THE STAFF MAGAZINE  
OF THE  
MERSEYSIDE AND  
NORTH WALES  
ELECTRICITY BOARD

Vol. 31 No. 11

November 1979

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Chester CH1 4LR

## STRAWS IN THE WIND

**D**URING recent months millions of fuel users—industrial and commercial as well as domestic—have been looking for cheaper or more reliable alternative supplies.

A few short years ago, before the phrase “energy crisis” was coined, cheap and apparently inexhaustible supplies of oil seemed to offer the solution to all heating problems. Rocketing prices, unreliable supplies, and political upheaval have changed all that.

Natural gas is now regarded by many as the “cheap fuel” of today. But the gas industry freely admits that it cannot meet demand, and big price rises are forecast.

Meanwhile the demand for off-peak electricity, sluggish for so long, is the subject of steady if unspectacular expansion as more and more people recognise that good insulation and reliability of supply make it a practical and comfortable long-term proposition.

**Electricity use by our customers for the April-to-September period shows a healthy upsurge compared with the same period last year, with most major industries recording substantially increased demands. While it would be foolhardy to predict that the demand for electricity is about to “take off” in dramatic fashion, these are straws in the wind.**

Against the background of uncertain availability of some fuels, and the rising cost of them all, they seem to point to busier times ahead for our industry.

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.

# Heating Campaign Warms Up

It seems that storage radiators for home heating are back in vogue—mind you for some of us they never went out. Sales of heaters have risen by 40% over last year, and our commercial colleagues are expecting greater things this coming winter.

The Consumer Association magazine *Which* has for many years been critical of the performance and of the running costs of the storage radiator. However in their September issue, after years of giving the storage radiator 'the thumbs-down,' they concede that 'now they are not quite so uncompetitive,' and give figures which show that on running costs alone electricity compares very favourably with gas.

It certainly puts paid to the argument of "change from electricity to any other fuel, based on running cost," and when the capital cost of a new system is added it means that change is economic madness. For new installations it now makes sense to choose electric storage radiators. Running costs are levelling out and the trend appears to be in electricity's favour, because of the question mark over the price and availability of gas. When you take account of installation costs storage radiators finish well ahead, being nearly half those of systems using other fuels.

## New Model

The range of storage heaters stocked by MANWEB has been extended this year to include a new type of heater. The *Variostor* models are known as convective storage radiators which give warmth when it is required and make big savings on running costs.

Up to 20% of the heat from the radiator can be controlled—on a mild day the heat which is not required can be held in the heater by simply turning a knob. On colder days the same knob can be used to give a boost when needed, and this can be set to give the same boost at a specific time each day, automatically.

One of the advantages of the electric system is that the customer can start with just one heater, and a special starter price is being offered by the Board for one heater, installed and working, from £99.50 for a standard radiator, with comparable deals throughout the range.

The campaign, launched in mid-September, is supported by national advertising from the Electricity Council, and by MANWEB using TV personality Brian Truman, in the press, on radio and in literature.

The seven hour tariffs are undoubtedly one reason for the growth in popularity of storage

radiators. Another is the development of home insulation. MANWEB insulation sales trebled last year compared with the previous year. Government grants are now available to assist in the improvement of insulation standards.

Leaflets and advertisements will be used to publicise the MANWEB home insulation service, which covers roof and cavity wall insulation, regardless of the fuel used to heat the property, free from VAT, on hire purchase terms with up to 2½ years to pay.

There is now a British Standard for the cavity foam fill and another for the quality of workmanship of the installation. Naturally enough our service complies.

Problems over the price and availability of oil for home heating is aiding the swing to electricity.

Already the price is 60 pence a gallon with more rises to come. One estate in the Board's area which is heated by oil supplied from one central tank has been informed by their supplier they will not be renewing the contract for the estate when the current agreement terminates in the next 18 months or so. This means the installation of individual tanks for each house for oil—if they can get it!

Many oil users are supplementing their systems by installing one or two storage radiators to supply the background heat, and using the oil to boost the warmth for short periods.

The MANWEB 2.6 kW *Variostor* convective storage radiator, one of three such heaters of different loadings which have been added to the MANWEB range. An automatic control can be set to give daily boost of heat at a preselected time or switched off to retain heat should the day be suddenly warmer.



## STAFF CONFERENCE

# The Chairman at Liverpool

During the next five years any changes within the MANWEB organisation will be so gradual that staff will hardly notice them said Board Chairman Ben Hastings, speaking to the annual staff conference organised by Liverpool District LAC.

"It has been said that the micro-processor revolution is going to affect everyone's lives", said the Chairman. "We have been used to the micro-processor evolution for years—that is what our VDU terminals are all about. We shall introduce innovations like this over the years with the minimum impact upon staff—except, perhaps, to help make their jobs more interesting. These will be no question of redundancies. This is staff care. We hope that these policies will encourage our staff to show our customers that we care for their interests.

More than 200 Liverpool colleagues, plus fifty-odd pensioners and guests from adjacent Districts and Head Office, packed the meeting and enjoyed the customary high-class meal.

The Chairman's talk, although labelled *Customer Care*, ranged widely over important issues concerning the industry and MANWEB.

Our customers cared most of all about the price of electricity, said Mr. Hastings. If we could keep that below the level of inflation we would be doing well. During the first five months of the current year MANWEB's electricity sales were up by 7½% on the same period last year—a very encouraging trend.

### EFFICIENCY

We would try to contain our prices by improving our efficiency and productivity. New jobs might be created where they could prove to be viable—the setting up of the theft detection teams was an example—and MANWEB would continue to provide work experience for a number of youngsters who would otherwise have no work.

The recently-published results of surveys into customer satisfaction, showing that the over-



whelming majority of people were pleased with work done for them by MANWEB, were something for us to be pleased about. They did much to nail the lie that we didn't care about our customers, added Mr. Hastings.

Other contributions to the evening's programme included a report on the year's work by LAC secretary Norman Mitchell, an Open Forum session with a number of searching written questions, and a vote of thanks from LAC member Ted Kelly.

# Darts Contest at Chester



The annual Darts Competition run by the Chester Sports and Social Club, had over 200 contestants and they played a total of 229 matches using ten boards.

The men's individual champion was Steve Jones from Queensferry, who beat Dave Griffin in the final. Irene Graham won the Ladies Championship, beating Marion Barlow.

In the team events the men's contest was won by Crane Street's 'Shovels and Ladders' the Ladies contest by 'Flighty Females' and the mixed competition by 'AC/DC'. They beat, in their respective finals 'Feather Lite', 'Just Four' and 'L'Homard Sans Points'

The clockwork precision of the non-stop darts from 5 to 11 p.m. was thanks to referees Hugh Farrow, Eifion Jenkins and Gren Roberts, assisted by Joyce Walker and Sybil Williams. The score was kept by scorers Neil Magill, Jim Wilcock, George Brown, Bob Liversage, Mike Boxall, Paul Cooke, Peter Meadows, Mike Gregory and Mike Hughes.

Men's individual champion, above left, Steve Jones shakes hands with Dave Griffin, runner-up. Top right, on the right of the picture, Irene Graham, ladies' champion, is congratulated by runner-up Marion Barlow. The winning teams pictured below are:— Ladies 'Flighty Females' (left to right)—Lisette Walker, Jenny Tomann, Judy Bailey and Ann Morgans. Mixed team winners 'AC/DC' (left to right)—Paul Morrison, Irene Graham, Ann Jones and Dave Lewis. The men's champion team (left to right)—Bill Griffiths, Brian Dodd, Albert Cooke and Peter Jones. Bottom left, Hugh Farrow maintains the giant scoreboard.



# Lively Meeting at Bootle

Our relationship with our customers during difficult times was the theme of North Mersey District's annual staff conference, held in the staff canteen at Bridle Road recently.

About 100 members of the District staff, plus pensioners and representatives of the Liverpool and North Wirral Local Advisory Committee. Guest speakers Jill Hart, secretary of the Area Electricity Consultative Council, and Board PRO Keith Baldwin, put the two sides of the issue—from the points of view of the public and of the MANWEB staff.

The two talks—entitled "*Are you being served?*" and "*Better than you think!*" did what they were intended to do by triggering off a vigorous and sometimes heated discussion in which the Board's performance in some fields came in for some outspoken criticism.

Miss Hart referred to the growth of "consumerism" during recent years. She said some people thought that MANWEB's aims of providing a service at the same time as making a profit were not compatible.

MANWEB's monopoly in the supply of electricity was resented by many of those who raised complaints. The customer was not always right, but the Consultative Council had to try to ensure that the public got a fair crack of the whip. It was often difficult to "get explanations across" to the public.

Miss Hart added that there were also those who felt that Electricity Boards had gone too far in their efforts to help people with problems. Such people felt that "MANWEB should start thinking about people who pay, and stop cossetting the scroungers."

She thought that the '*Code of Practice*', although designed to minimise hardship and help people in difficulties, was not the complete answer.

"Recently we had to deal with a lady who owed £200 when a '*Code of Practice*' arrangements was made. Now she owes £600 which she has no hope of paying. I don't know what the answer is in this kind of situation" she added.

Mr. Baldwin outlined the development of the '*Customer Care*' programme throughout MANWEB during the past 12 months, emphasising that the early part of the programme had been largely devoted to putting the Board's house in order from an

Miss Jill Hart, right, and some of the delegates to the North Mersey District Employees' Annual Meeting.



administrative point of view, rooting out officialdom and bureaucracy and clearing bottlenecks.

He laid stress on the essential role of staff consultation, on the ideas and opinions of those in direct contact with the public, and emphasised that a lot of work remained to be done to ensure that everyone's opinions—especially those of the outside staff—were made clear.

The vast majority of MANWEB customers were satisfied with the service they received. Nobody liked the way in which the price of electricity had risen, but this was due to factors completely outside our control—mainly the sharply rising cost of power station fuel.

The difficulties which had beset the industry in recent years had made life much harder for many MANWEB employees, who were all too often "the meat in the sandwich." Most MANWEB people did their utmost to give good service, sometimes in very trying circumstances. When, on occasion, MANWEB came in for public criticism the staff were "always right unless they were very conclusively proved to be wrong" as far as the MANWEB public relations section was concerned.

# Trueman's Good Delivery at Dee Valley District Conference

**SOME** members of our Dee Valley District staff, on hearing that a Mr. Trueman was to be guest speaker at their annual conference, thought of Freddie, the well-known and entertaining bowler. However, they were not disappointed when it was revealed that their guest was Mr. Brian Trueman, the well-known TV presenter and entertaining speaker.

Over 250 people packed the ballroom at the Bryn Howell Hotel in the Vale of Llangollen to hear Mr. Glyn Dodd (*Group Manager*) welcome staff, pensioners and guests to the meeting.

He went on to speak of the progress made by MANWEB in general and Dee Valley District in particular. On behalf of the Board he thanked all the District staff for their fine efforts, especially during the severe weather conditions experienced earlier this year.

He then introduced special guest speaker Mr. Brian Trueman as "The Man from MANWEB" as

he was featured in so much of our publicity.

Mr. Trueman took the customer's point of view in a talk laced with humorous anecdotes and personal experiences.

He said that many people did not fully understand or appreciate their dependence on, or the many advantages of, electricity . . . "*one of the benefactors of modern society . . .* and that they became aware of electricity just four times a year when the bill dropped through the letter box.

He expressed his view that only members of the staff could truly communicate with customers . . . "*not by official statements or by press advertisements but by the people themselves, meter readers, etc. People believe in people*" he continued, "*and not always in the printed word.*"

As a customer he said, "*What I want from the Electricity Board is a feeling that the person I talk to knows what he or she is talking about. I must have confidence in the staff, even if on occasions they don't know the answer to my question, but they admit it!*"

He urged all MANWEB staff to think of the positive advantages of electricity service and of the appliances available. In closing, Mr. Trueman said that despite all the competition amongst the rival fuels for home heating, he believed the key to success in the future was in heat saving insulation.

To back up the Board's Customer Care campaign, a very topical film "*Who killed the Sale*" was screened and this, generally, was well received.

The business part of the meeting concluded with a lengthy 'Open Forum' session followed by a vote of thanks to one and all expressed by Mr. Len Whalley (*Vice-Chairman, No 4 LAC*).



Despite the empty glasses, it was all smiles from these members of our Dee Valley District staff at their annual meeting.

# Talking Notes

## COARSE FISHING CHAMPIONS

Fishermen from MANWEB have won the Electricity Supply Industry National Coarse Fishing Championship, with the winning individual and runner-up in the team. The fourth annual contest was held this year on the River Ouse, near York, early in October. It was organised by the C.E.G.B. North Eastern Region, and teams were invited from members of the Electricity Supply Industry in Area Board and Generating Regions throughout the country.

In all there were 189 anglers fishing, and the man from MANWEB who beat the lot was Head Office revenue clerk **Dave Lewis**, with a total weight of 8lb 15oz. in fish. Dave, who is 24, started fishing as a youngster on canals and the River Dee in his native Chester, and is well and truly 'hooked' on the sport. It is the fourth time he has

fished the championship, being placed fourth last year. He fishes for the Deva Club in Chester and represents the city in the national league. A Deva team-mate and another city angler was placed second in the E.S.I. championship, he is **Stan Wright**, a foreman of the overhead linesmen in the Dee Valley District.

The teams consisted of up to 15 anglers with the top 12 weights counting toward the team positions. The MANWEB fifteen were captained by **John Tyreman** an administrative assistant in the internal audit section at Head Office, and he too fishes for the Deva Club.

The two miles or so of the River Ouse were divided into five sections with a prize for the top two weights in each section. Dave Lewis and Stan Wright won their sections. So too did Head Office engineer, **Gordon Hibbert**, while revenue clerk, **Chris Sim** picked up second prize in his section—quite a sweep of the prizes and

The MANWEB coarse fishing team, pictured from left to right: Dennis Williams, Dave Rawsthorne, Norman Rawsthorne, Derek Gorton, Roy Briscoe, John Tyreman (with the cup), Gordon Hibbert, Chris Sim, Stan Wright, John Hassall, Alan Royle, Stan Hughes, Dave Garret and individual champion Dave Lewis. Missing from the picture is Peter Edwards who, we are reliably informed, "had gone to get the beer in!"



pool money for MANWEB anglers.

It has been the tradition of the contest that the winning team chooses the venue and organises the following years championship, so the winning men from MANWEB will have the opportunity to defend their title on their home waters.

**Electricity Supply  
(Staff)**

**Superannuation Scheme  
Thirtieth Annual  
General Meeting  
of members**

**Thursday, 13th Dec 1979**  
at 2.30 pm at the  
Electricity Council H.Q.  
30 Millbank, London

**Super Farm**

With 900 kW of connected load producing a demand of 500 kW, Norland's Farm at Widnes, run by four brothers of the Caldwell family, is the Board's largest farm customer—possibly the biggest in the country.

A short time ago, President of the National Farmers' Union, Mr. Richard Butler, was the guest of honour at the farm for an open day demonstration of Britain's biggest grass drying plant.

On site at Norland's super farm we see, from left to right: Messrs Godfrey Caldwell, Tony Swift (Industrial sales engineer, Mid-Mersey), Richard Butler (President NFU) and Bernard Caldwell.



Mr. Butler, son of the former Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Butler, talked to farmers of the frightening rises in production costs.

"Agriculture, including horticulture, has an excellent track record of repaying national investment," he said "We have proven we can produce the goods. Farm prices are limited by Government action, and if these limits are so rigid as to deprive our biggest industry of the resources needed to safeguard supplies and cut our huge import bill, then we are on a course for disaster."

**New Appointment**

After 27 years' loyal service, man-and-boy as they say, **Jim Briereley** from our Oswestry District Commercial section has now moved over to Clwyd District to take up a new appointment.

A very active and popular member of the staff, Jim has served on many local committees.

On behalf of his many friends at Oswestry, Jim was presented with a parting gift which was handed over by **Reg Edwards** (Installation Engineer).

**Ideal Home Cooking**

A feature of the Chester Ideal Home Exhibition held recently at the city's Northgate Arena was a series of cookery

presentations by MANWEB demonstrators.

North Wirral's **Marjorie Scregg** and Dee Valley's **Maureen Edwards** shared the one hour demonstrations, giving two per day for the five days of



**Demonstrator Maureen Edwards, left, and student Christine Williams.**

the exhibition. They were assisted by Liverpool District trainee demonstrator **Cerys Jones** and **Christine Williams** a 3rd year student at Leeds University who was gaining work experience with the Board as part of her home economics degree course.

Introducing the demonstrations to the total of 700 people who attended their cook-ins was senior demonstrator from Head Office, **Ann Roney-Smith**.

With October being the energy conservation month the recipes and appliances showed the audiences the correct use of electricity.

The fan assisted oven which gave fast economic oven cooking, a fridge-freezer showed how food can be stored, and the micro-wave oven, how it is used for quick economic re-constitution of the frozen pre-cooked meals.

Much interest was shown in the micro-wave oven and the ceramic hob on the Belling electric cooker. Audience int-

erest was stimulated by a quiz based on the demonstration with the prize winners taking home the expertly cooked dishes made during the demonstrations.

### Electrical Link-Up

We offer our best wishes for a happy future to **Bert Williams** (electrician) and **Susan Powell** (clerk) whose marriage took place at St. Martins Church, Oswestry a short time ago.



The happy couple, Bert and Susan Williams.

The couple both work in our Oswestry District where their friends subscribed to present them with a number of gifts to help give a good start to their partnership.

We join with them in wishing Bert and Susan many happy years ahead.

### Proposed

#### NORTH MERSEY DISTRICT RETIRED EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

It is proposed to establish an Association for social activities and the welfare of retired members of the Staff in the North Mersey District.

If you would like to join the Association please drop a line to Mr. George Shoemith, District Administrative Officer, MANWEB District Office, Bridle Road, Bootle L30 4XA.

Should you wish to actively help in the initial organisation and setting up of the Association, please indicate in your letter.

### Well done Dinner Ladies!

School meals staff are often subject to more criticism than anyone else in catering, now have the opportunity to prove that they are capable of producing haute cuisine as well as the daily run-of-the-mill daily dishes.

For the very first time in their annual competitions, the Salon Culinaire International de Londres has opened a special class for Local Authority School Meals catering staff. Throughout the country about 800 school meal cooks have entered in the 21 regional heats of the contest which reaches its final stage at Hotelympia in London next January.

The regional heats for the Cheshire and the Clwyd areas

were held at the MANWEB Head Office restaurant recently.

The winner from the 20 cooks from Cheshire County was Mrs. Vera Quirk from Beechwood C.P. School near Runcorn. From the 30 entries in the Clwyd region, Mrs. Beryl Hughes from Mountain Lane C.P. School, Buckley, was the winner.

Three eminent members from the Craft Guild of Chefs, each holding the highest award, were presented with the task of finding the winners.

### Re-Appointed

Mr. John Nott, Secretary of State for Trade, has re-appointed **Mr. M. J. Moore** as Chairman of the Merseyside and North Wales Electricity Consultative Council from October 1st, 1979 to March 31st, 1980.

### E.A.W. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Pictured in the Mayor's Parlour at Chester Town Hall following the Annual General Meeting of the area branch of the Electrical Association for Women. From left to right: Miss Beth Owen (Liverpool District demonstrator), Mrs. Mary Evans (Area Treasurer, EAW), Sheila Beese (Area Organiser, EAW), Mrs. Peggy Ramsden-Williams (National Executive Committee), Mr. A. N. Lightbody (Cheshire County Fire Officer and guest speaker), Mrs. Ann McMullan (National Director, EAW), Councillor Hugh Jones (Mayor of Chester), Mrs. Brenda Williams (Area Chairman, EAW), Mr. William Shires (MANWEB Chief Commercial Officer), Mrs. Shires, Councillor Mrs. Alice Robinson (Deputy Area Chairman EAW), and Mrs. Judith McIntyre (Mid-Cheshire District demonstrator).





Guest speaker Miss Jill Hart and Mr. Harold Allman (Secretary No. 6 LAC).

# DOUBLE HEADER at Mid-Cheshire Employees' Meeting

## Talk & Tricks



District pensioners Mrs. Mildred Le Voi and Mr. George Wood.

A forthright and lively speech from Miss Jill Hart (Secretary of the Merseyside and North Wales Electricity Consultative Council) and a magic cabaret act from Mr. Doug. Gregg (senior engineer, Commercial), were the top attractions at this year's Employees' Conference for our Mid-Cheshire District staff. The venue, once again, was Alvaston Hall, Nantwich, where an excellent meal was enjoyed prior to the business of the meeting.

Miss Hart opened her remarks by explaining the wide range of problems brought to the Consultative Council by quoting from individual customer cases.

"To many people, MANWEB is the bill coming through the door," she went on. "To others, MANWEB is when supplies are interrupted through storms or MANWEB is the inefficient organisation which cannot supply spare parts for appliances."

She urged that customers should be made aware of the full organisation of MANWEB and what it takes to keep the service and supply going for 24 hours a day every day of every year.

Commenting that many of the complaints received at her office suggested that MANWEB staff were unidentifiable she said that when dealing with customers we should not be afraid to give our names.

"This personal touch is important," she said. "It gives the customer a direct link with the Board. Sometimes it may bounce back, but in the long run, it is a tribute to you and your relations with the customer who often only wants a simple answer to his question."

Expressing a personal view, Miss Hart said it was time that blatant non-payers were told that they were stealing. By not attempting to pay their bills, their action was just as criminal as breaking into a coin meter. She said that the Consultative Council accepted the need for ultimate disconnection in cases where it was found to be necessary.

She welcomed the saving stamp scheme and other methods of easy payment of electricity accounts to help the vast majority of customers who were honest.

Earlier in the proceedings, Mr. Norman Maden

In this happy group we see, from left to right: Avis Allen (supervisor, Sandbach shop), Judith McIntyre (demonstrator), Harry Foreman (Asst. Chief Engineer—Civil), Lynne Joyce (our "Girl from MANWEB") and Graham Zeiher (Mid-Cheshire District Engineer).

Our candid camera catches Mr. Albert Watts (store-keeper) chatting with Mr. Norman Maden.





## Pictured at



## the Conference



(Group Manager) had welcomed everyone to the meeting and had a special word of thanks for the team, led by Mr. Harold Allman who had arranged the conference.

He went on to say he had recently noticed in many large stores that they no longer displayed signs stating 'Shoplifters will be prosecuted'. These had been replaced by 'Thieves will be prosecuted'. He made the point that in MANWEB last year we had some 1300 theft cases prosecuted in the courts. "Every time we prosecute, we cut our losses," he added.

Mr. Maden then spoke of the recent poll which stated that between 90 and 99 per cent of electricity supply customers were satisfied with the service. "Even if we in MANWEB have 99 per cent customer satisfaction that still leaves 12,000 customers who are not quite happy with us!"

Then Mr. Doug. Gregg was introduced to perform his most entertaining magic act. He quickly won the audience over with his humorous patter and clever sleight-of-hand tricks and had everyone applauding for more. He found an excellent 'accomplice' in Mr. Bob Scott, from the Northwich depot garage, who was in the hot seat for part of the act. Bob's pals at Northwich are still wondering why Doug didn't make him disappear!

The very successful conference concluded with a slick disco run by Messrs. John Drew and Ron Neil.

**Man of magic Doug Gregg treats his 'customer' with care as he mystifies Bob Scott,**



# electric living

## Christmas Gifts from MANWEB

Looking for ideas for gifts for the family now that Christmas is almost upon us? Why not give electric and maybe save yourself a few pounds at the same time? The staff discount on all items the Board sell is available to employees and retired personnel of the electricity supply industry.

On this page are pictured some of the many ideas for gifts for all the family. Heated hair rollers, shavers, radios, tape recorders, electric blankets, hair-dryers are but just a few items available from MANWEB shops from £4 upwards.

Ask at your local shop or Commercial Department for the 'Gift Value' leaflet for a lot more ideas.



" Christmas is coming, the goose is getting fat  
Save up your pennies and don't forget the VAT  
Bring 'em all to MANWEB and lots of goods you'll see,  
That make great gifts for all the family.

Radios, recorders, heated rollers too,  
An automatic tea-maker for an early brew,  
Shavers and hair-dryers, machines to make coffee  
And with your staff discount, you'll save a bob or three!

## Try a Quick Pizza

At the recent Chester Ideal Home Exhibition, demonstrators Marjorie Scregg and Maureen Edwards produced a quick pizza, using a scone base. You need:—

- 8 oz self-raising flour
- 2 oz margarine
- ½ pint milk
- 6 oz strong sliced cheese
- tin sardines in tomato sauce
- 8 oz can tomatoes
- black olives
- 1 teaspoon mixed herbs and pinch salt

Pre-heat the oven to 400 deg. F. Lightly grease two 8-inch pizza tins. Sift flour and salt together, rub in margarine until mixture is like fine breadcrumbs, then add herbs.

Add the milk and stir with a

fork until just mixed. Knead lightly on a floured board, roll out and line the tins.

Line the pizza with sliced cheese, sardines and tomatoes and add a few black olives, finishing off with more slices of cheese. Bake for 35 minutes, and serve with green salad.



## A COOK'S TOUR — FINLAND

With the prospect of turkey, pork, plum duff, mince pies, Christmas cake and all the rich goodies the Yuletide season brings our poor old tums are going to take a bit of a hammering. Why not give the digestive system a rest and try a fish dish.

As it will be cold outside we have travelled north to one of the

worlds coldest countries—Finland—where they serve up a delicious fish casserole which they call:—

### KALALAAITIKKO

*Ingredients for four portions*

- 1lb cod fillet
- 6 medium potatoes (sliced thinly)
- 2 carrots (sliced thinly)
- 1 chopped onion
- ¾ pint milk
- 1 egg
- 1 oz butter
- breadcrumbs, salt, pepper, bayleaf

### Method

Cut fish into 1 oz. pieces. Butter a baking dish and layer fish, sliced potatoes, carrots and onion alternately. Season and add a bayleaf.

Mix the egg and the milk and pour over fish and veg. Sprinkle on the breadcrumbs and add butter. Cook for 50 minutes at 350 deg.F.

*Recipe from Dave Ollier, Taylor Plan Catering.*

## Daffynitions ...



... microwave!!



**GWEN CONACHER LOOKS AT CONTACT GRILLS AND SLOW COOKERS**

**A difficult choice.** Imagine if you could have just one plug-in worktop cooker as an extra in your kitchen, would you choose a fast contact grill or a slow cook-pot?

Those who can't even think about menus until after five in the evening will fall for the speed and versatility of the contact grill, while plan-ahead personalities will love the slow cooker. You can prepare dinner at 7am and put your feet up in the evening.

## Fast and fun

Contact grills cook steaks, toast sandwiches, heat pizzas — fast! The speed comes from the combination of conducted and infra-red heat from

ridged plates both above and below the food. This system seals in flavour and juices and cuts down on shrinkage.

You can cook foil-wrapped items and softer foods on those models

that have baking trays. The cooking plates usually have non-stick coating and removable ones are really easy to clean.



## Slow and delicious

Slow cooking pots are quite different. They work at a very low temperature so that dishes such as stews and casseroles get long slow economical cooking to make them tender and tasty. Cheaper cuts of meat cook wonderfully this way. Once the ingredients have been prepared they can be left to cook for around eight

to ten hours. The slow cooker is amazingly versatile, and will cook a wide range of food from French onion soup to sponge puddings! Food can be left cooking safely even if you have to be out all day.





## No. 3 L.A.C. CONFERENCE

Conference delegates and guest speaker Miss Jill Hart.

# CARING FOR THE CUSTOMER

The emphasis of the employees' annual meeting for Mid-Mersey District was on customer relations, the guest speaker being Miss Jill Hart, secretary of the Electricity Consultative Council, the customer's watchdog.

The LAC secretary Mr. John Sherwen, who with his staff organised the meeting, welcomed delegates and handed the meeting over to the chairman for the evening, Group Manager, Mr. Norman Maden. He introduced the guest speaker and other guests including a representative from each department at Head Office.

He then briefly reviewed the MANWEB year telling delegates that the cost of electricity was directly affected by any rise in miners' pay. In their present negotiations should they receive a 20% increase this would wipe out the Board's £11.8 million profit.

Mr. Maden was greatly concerned about the theft of electricity and commented there had been 1300 prosecutions in the last 12 months. Turning to the subject of 'Customer Care' he stressed the need for continued vigilance when dealing with the customer. A recent customer survey had shown a high degree of customer satisfaction with MANWEB service and the Group Manager was particularly pleased with the results in the North Mersey District. The reference to customer care led nicely into an introduction for the guest speaker Miss Hart.

She began by outlining the statutory functions of the Consultative Council and then told delegates

as a statement of fact rather than criticism, the major sources of complaint from customers, such as the cost of the Head Office building, the computer, the price of electricity, contracting charges and the indexing of invoices by their numbers rather than by name or address.

Miss Hart said that the customer had the right to courtesy from MANWEB staff and to know the name of the person whom he was speaking, and she urged staff to give their names when dealing with customers.

Her concern was to see that all customers had fair treatment from MANWEB and not just the bad payers. She thought that customers should be made responsible for their own affairs, and she wanted new ways to help them to meet their commitments introduced. One such idea was the installation of a circuit breaker which limited the consumption as a possible alternative to disconnection.

She welcomed the 'Customer Care' programme which would aid customer relations. In general she thought that the customer was being well served by MANWEB and from her experience particularly well in Mid-Mersey District.

The open forum followed Miss Hart's talk and one of the first questions asked if the Board's management were as concerned about staff care as they were about customer care. Answering, Board Secretary Mr. John Scudamore, stated that the Board were anxious to be seen as a good employer, the point had been

*Continued opposite . . .*



# LETTERS

From a Warwickshire gent (who had been asked to act as guarantor for the electricity supply to his son's flat at Aberystwyth)

"My first reaction was one of incredulity followed by the thought that I must at least sever an artery and sign it in blood—then I realised that in a university town it was possible that you did have the odd problem!

"I enclose the form duly signed in the hope that your chief executive may enjoy one or two nights at least of untroubled sleep!

\* \* \*

The imagination runs rife over a cryptic note recorded at Dee Valley work control section:

*"Lamp off in cul-de-sac, three widows depend on it shining into their bedrooms at night, they had a bad night last night without the light."*

## No. 3 L.A.C. CONFERENCE—continued

raised in the 'Customer Care' working group of which he was chairman, and as a result the views of MANWEB employees were sought in the form of a questionnaire to be published in 'Contact' shortly.

Amongst other questions was a query when or if 'flexitime' was to be introduced in the District. An assurance was given that it was being examined but there were many problems to overcome. Concern was expressed about the condition of Warrington shop, and huge queues and the number of accounts from Norweb customers taken by the shop. Plans were in hand to improve conditions and management were aware that something must be done to alleviate the problem of long queues.

The open forum concluded the business part of the meeting and delegates retired for a buffet supper and concluded the evening dancing to the disco music of Ron Neil and John Drew.



# SARAH-JANE

No doubt all our readers will recall the tragic story of young Sarah-Jane Williams from Oswestry who suffered brain damage following an operation.

On appeal, everyone rallied round to raise money for specialised treatment.

The good news is that now she will not have to make the long trip to Philadelphia in these early stages as a clinic has been set up in Bridgewater in this country.

Already there are over a hundred patients waiting for treatment Sarah-Jane is number four on the list and is booked for a visit to the clinic to see the specialists in January.

Her father Terry, our shop supervisor at Oswestry, and mother Joyce have written to Sid Warburton as secretary of the Fund Raising Committee, and to rep-

resentatives at Head Office and each District who helped organise the "Grand Draw".

The letter reads as follows:

"Thank you for your help in raising money for the Sarah-Jane Appeal Fund. We would be grateful if you would pass on our appreciation to colleagues and friends throughout the Board.

"It may please you to know that the Appeal Fund reached £21,000 and that MANWEB was the largest single contributor, a great achievement when one considers that money was arriving from literally all over the country.

"Sarah-Jane is making slow but steady progress and we feel sure that with specialised help and advice from Philadelphia, she could well be on the road to recovery.

"Thanks once again

Terry & Joyce Williams"



# RETIREMENTS



**Mr. Derek Hughes opens his 'gift box' watched by Mrs. Doreen Davies (supply clerk) and Mr. Lyn Price (DCE).**

## Mr. D. HUGHES

Half-a-century ago, a very lively young lad named Derek Hughes started work in the electricity supply industry as an apprentice electrician with a private contractor.

In 1941 he joined the former Bangor Corporation Electricity Department and was still with them seven years later when MANWEB took over. He stayed at the Bangor depot for a couple of years then became a sales representative at Penmaenmawr until 1955 when he was appointed as Commercial assistant at Barmouth in the Aberystwyth District.

Derek retired recently as 3rd engineer in the Commercial department at District Office.

He and his wife joined his colleagues at a local

hotel for an informal get-together to mark the occasion of his retirement. During the evening he was presented with a 'surprise' gift box which contained his old tea mug and some oxo cubes covering a cheque from his friends in the District. Derek informed them that the money would be used to buy some special tools he wanted.

In retirement Derek will be able to devote more time to his hobbies of gardening, repairing old clocks and carpentry work.

## Mr. S. FISH

After 27 years' service with the Board Mr. Stan Fish recently retired from his job as craftsman's mate at out Runcorn depot.

On behalf of his many friends Stan was presented with a clock by Mr. W. Evans (senior production engineer), while Mrs. Fish received a spray of flowers.

Accompanied by his wife at the piano Stan enjoys singing to members of pensioners' clubs in the Runcorn area.

## Mrs. MYRA JACOBSON

After 35 years' service to the industry Mrs. Myra Jacobson, principal assistant in the customer liaison section at Liverpool District, retired recently.

Myra started with Liverpool Corporation in 1944, working for a long time in the revenue section and moving to Lister Drive in 1967. In the years which followed she assumed an increasing level of responsibility, and her wide knowledge of District affairs was appreciated by successive District Administrative Officers.

Her popularity with her colleagues was demonstrated by the many gifts she received on retirement, and a farewell celebration party and disco at the sports and social club was exceptionally well attended.

After the pressures of work during recent years she will be relaxing for a few months before taking up voluntary work.

**Friends and colleagues gather round as Mrs. Myra Jacobson is presented with one of their farewell gifts by Mr. Dennis Hughes (District Administrative Officer)**



# PENSION INCREASES 1979

The industry's Pensions (Increase) Scheme empowers the Electricity Council to determine the rates of increases to be granted to those who receive pensions from the industry's Schemes. The Council have carried out a review of pension increases and have decided that pensions will be increased, with effect from 1st December, 1979, as follows:

**For those who received an increase on 1st December 1978—17.5% of the basic pension as increased;**

**For those who retired after 30th June, 1978:**

Date pension commenced	% Increase
After 1.7.78 but before 2.8.78	23.3
After 1.8.78 but before 2.9.78	21.9
After 1.9.78 but before 2.10.78	20.4
After 1.10.78 but before 2.11.78	19.0
After 1.11.78 but before 2.12.78	17.5
After 1.12.78 but before 2.1.79	16.0
After 1.1.79 but before 2.2.79	14.6
After 1.2.79 but before 2.3.79	13.1
After 1.3.79 but before 2.4.79	11.7
After 1.4.79 but before 2.5.79	10.2
After 1.5.79 but before 2.6.79	8.8
After 1.6.79 but before 2.7.79	7.3
After 1.7.79 but before 2.8.79	5.8
After 1.8.79 but before 2.9.79	4.4
After 1.9.79 but before 2.10.79	2.9
After 1.10.79 but before 2.11.79	1.5

The industry's arrangements for increasing pensions in past years have followed Annual Review Orders applicable to retired Government servants. The current Annual Review Order introduces changes to the pattern set by previous Orders and although the basic principles of these changes are retained in the industry's arrangements, the arrangements vary from the Order for reasons of practicability. Pensions due for an increase for the first time this year are those which commenced not later than 1st November, 1979 (*in previous years the date has been 1st July*) and these increases are related to the

month of retirement (*previously the period was one of six months during which retirement took place*). These changes mean that the first increase of many pensions will take place sooner than has been the practice in the past and that, because of the "month of retirement" feature, individual cases will be dealt with more adequately.

Some pensions which commenced after 5th April 1978, include a guaranteed minimum pension element comprising the amount of pension the Scheme is required to provide in respect of contracted-out employment. As the State will provide pensions increases on those guaranteed minimum pensions, the increases in such cases will be based on the Scheme pension less the guaranteed minimum pension.

Broadly, pensions increases apply to pensioners aged 55 years and over and to all widows but in addition, children's allowances will, from 1st December, 1979 be increased to:

(a) £383.64 a year in cases where the person responsible for the child is in receipt of a widow/widower's pension from the Scheme in respect of the deceased member;

(b) £575.52 a year in cases where the person responsible for the child is not in receipt of a widow/widower's pension from the Scheme in respect of the deceased member.

In their review of pensions increases, Council were concerned about the very high cost of maintaining the purchasing power of pensions. With the continuing high level of inflation these costs are making serious inroads into the resources of the Industry's Superannuation Schemes and although everything possible will be done to provide pensioner's with full protection against inflation, there can be no guarantee that the purchasing power of pensions can be maintained indefinitely. If it becomes necessary to consider changes there will be full prior discussions with the Management Committees of the Industry's Scheme and with Trade Unions.

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## Obituary

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We deeply regret to record the deaths of the following colleagues:

**Mr. A. Norris**, who served the industry for 34 years before retiring from his job as a cable joiner at Warrington depot. He was 76.

**Mr. Thomas Hackett**, who was employed in the cooker repair/

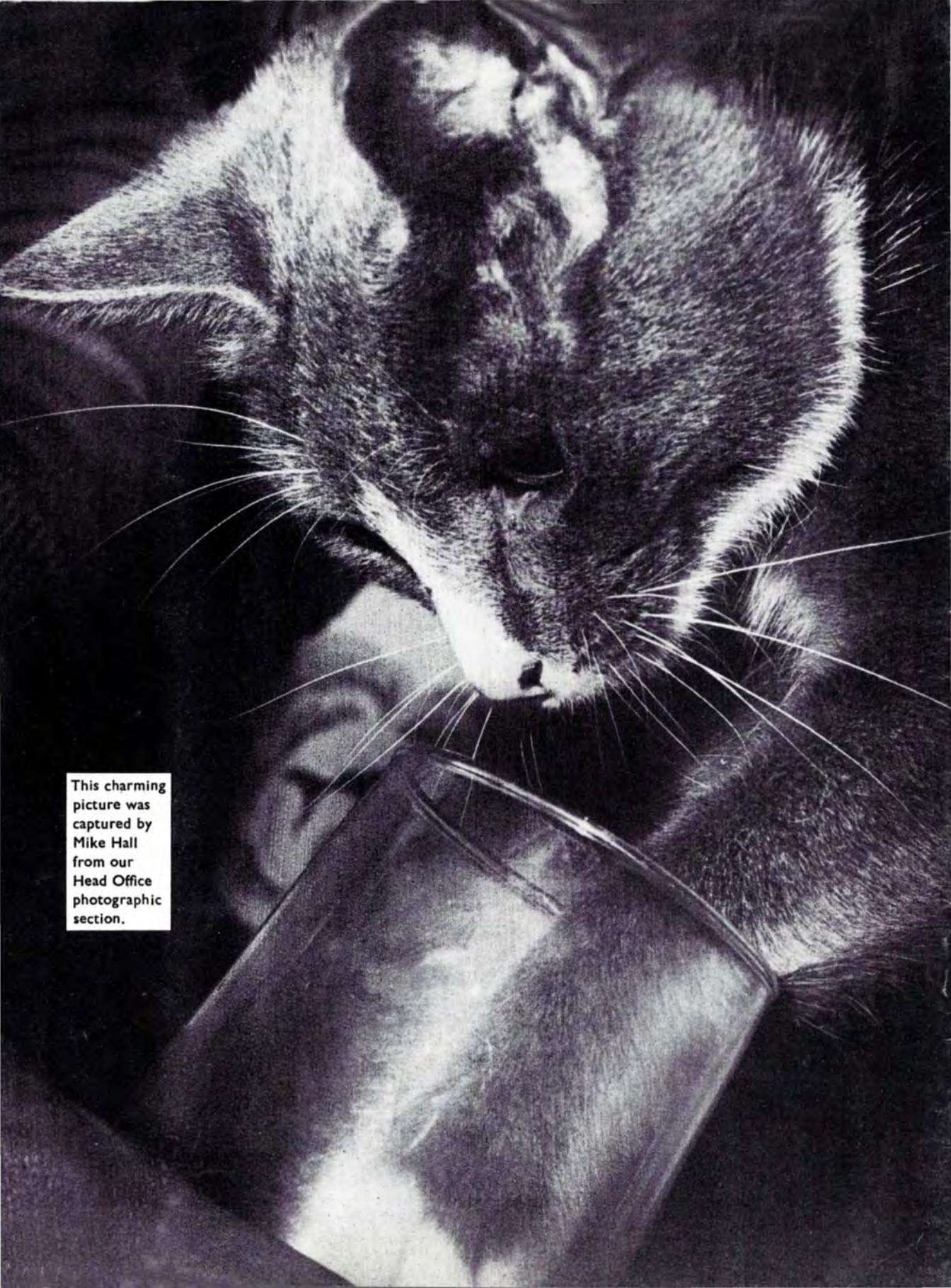
assembly department at Lock Street, Northwich, prior to his retirement in 1962. Mr. Hackett, who was 81, was the oldest pensioner from the former Northwich District. His son-in-law, Mr. Harry Hassall, is a linesman at Northwich, while grandson Tony works at Head Office.

**Mr. Cyril McNally**, aged 69, a former timekeeper at the New Crane Street depot in our Dee

Valley District until his retirement in 1975.

He served with the RAF and British Rail prior to joining MANWEB.

**Mr. James R. Tibbott**, aged 59, who retired prematurely due to ill health in 1977. He joined the Board in 1951 and worked as a linesman at the Vauxhall Construction depot, later transferring to Legacy.



This charming picture was captured by Mike Hall from our Head Office photographic section.