

CONTACT

October 1972



A cherished veteran
(see page 207)



Left to right: Miss Dorothy Black (Council Secretary), Mr. McKenzie, Mr. Dodds, and Mr. and Mrs. Evans.

Farewell to Mr. Evans

Mr. Harry Evans, Chairman of the Merseyside and North Wales Area Electricity Consultative Council since the nationalisation of the electricity industry, retired from that office on September 30th, and made his final appearance as Chairman at a meeting of the Council, held in Chester on the previous day.

Paying tribute to Mr. Evans' work, MANWEB Chairman Mr. Denis Dodds linked his name with the completion of our rural electrification programme—the biggest in Western Europe—which

had involved taking power to 60,000 premises, including 22,000 farms, and the provision of 6,300 miles of mains. Mr. Evans said he was proud to see the completion of the scheme, which meant so much to the people of North Wales.

On behalf of the Council members, Mr. Evans was presented with a TV set and cigarette box by his successor, Mr. C. S. McKenzie, who said that Mr. Evans had always fought very keenly on the consumer's behalf.

COMING EVENTS

- October 30th No. 9 DJAC District Conference, Capenhurst
- Oct. 31st—Nov. 3rd MANWEB Home & Leisure Exhibition, Aberystwyth
- November 3rd LAC Employees' Conference, Head Office, Chester
- November 3rd LAC Employees' Conference, North Mersey (at Southport)
- November 4th Bonfire and Fireworks Display, Head Office (Tickets from welfare, Head Office)
- November 7th/10th . MANWEB Home and Leisure Exhibition, Wallasey
- November 14th/17th MANWEB Home and Leisure Exhibition, Walton, Liverpool
- November 22nd/25th MANWEB Home and Leisure Exhibition, Rhyl
- November 23rd LAC Employees' Conference, Mid-Cheshire (at Nantwich)
- November 24th LAC Employees' Conference, Oswestry
- November 25th Thingwall Road, (Liverpool) Cricket Section Dance (see page 208)
- Nov. 29th—Dec. 2nd MANWEB Home and Leisure Exhibition, Sandbach
- December 5th/9th . . MANWEB Home and Leisure Exhibition, Bangor
- December 8th Clwyd Sports and Social Buffet-Dance, Llandudno



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EDITORIAL

Caging a Tiger

UNTIL relatively recently, for most people in Britain, "inflation" was a dimly-understood catchword commonly used by politicians and economists.

The average man-in-the-street, asked what he understood by the word, would probably have muttered something about people in comfortably-distant lands of long ago lighting cigarettes with million-mark notes or taking a wheelbarrow full of paper money to buy a loaf of bread.

Today the man-in-the-street knows all about inflation, and so, in particular, does the woman-in-the-supermarket. Over the past year or so they have seen house prices rocket to a level which turns the ordinary young couple's dream of their own home into a mocking illusion. Every week the cost of filling the family's shopping basket goes up and up, and every housewife knows that her increased grocery bills and five-per-cent-a-year are poles apart.

Probably for the first time the dangers of inflation for all sections of the community are recognised in a really widespread way, and there is no doubt that a very large proportion of the people are most anxious to see this voracious monster checked, and finally caged.

Unfortunately, the process of stopping inflation is no simple matter, and can perhaps be compared with playing "pass the parcel" with a time-bomb—no one wants to be left "holding the baby" when the music stops! No employee wants his particular wage-claim to be on top of the "pending" pile! No manufacturer wants his next price increase to be the one that never reached the shelves of the shops!

The consequences of running in the inflation stakes with any kind of handicap are clearly visible in our own industry's economic

(Continued overleaf)

plight over the past two years, when tariff restrictions coupled with soaring costs have led to a fundamentally sound and profitable business recording massive financial losses.

For the sake of the country in general, and our own families and our own industry in particular, we can only hope that growing public awareness

of the disastrous consequences of continued inflation may quickly lead to an agreed pattern of economic life, possibly involving some measure of sacrifice by all sections of the community, which may drag us back from the brink of the abyss that surely lies not far ahead.

Rocketing costs mean another Deficit—

—THE CHAIRMAN COMMENTS ON 1971/72

The electricity supply industry's annual reports and accounts for the year ended on March 31st, 1972, were published on September 26th, and press conferences to announce the results of the year's work were held in London by the Electricity Council and CEGB, and

by the area electricity boards in various provincial centres.

The following is the text of a statement by MANWEB Chairman Mr. Denis Dodds, at a press conference in Liverpool:

“THE announcement of an overall trading loss of £1.57m by MANWEB for 1971/72 (following a loss of £2.87m in the previous year) and a loss of £23m by Electricity Boards generally, may obscure the fact that since our formation, efficiency in the use of resources in real terms has steadily improved at the same time as over 450,000 additional consumers have been supplied with electricity. Last month, for example, we completed our massive rural electrification programme. Since its commencement, 6,300 miles of electricity lines have been built, mainly in North Wales, and some 60,000 premises, including 22,000 farms, have been provided with electricity at a total cost of some £14m.

“If we had not, while extending supplies in this and other ways, improved capital efficiency (*load factor*) by over 20%, increased energy sales by more than 400%, increased profit on our retailing activities from £6,500 in our first year to £467,000 this year, and had not the production of electricity from each ton of fuel improved by 33%, our financial loss today would have been immeasurably greater. These solid achievements should not be forgotten while we concentrate on the issues giving rise to our present financial position.

Coal up 50%

“Last year, we and the public endured the rigours of the miners' strike and the picketing of power stations. After it was over, the cost of coal supplied to power stations rose once again. Since 1968/69, the

cost of coal has risen by 50%. Overall fuel prices, which amount to 35% of our total costs, have risen nationally by 45%. This represents an increase of £14 million in MANWEB's annual costs.

“Other costs too have increased significantly. Last year, for example, rate payments to local authorities increased by 19.6%, interest charges by 11.6% and working expenses by 11.1%. Since 1968/69, the increase in overall annual costs has become approximately £40.5 million while the increase in annual revenue amounts to only £36 million. Present indications give rise to little expectation that this disastrous trend of cost inflation has yet run its course.

Deficits Inevitable

“Despite the inevitability of deficits, we have subscribed to the undertakings on price restraint given by the C.B.I. The increase of 5% in domestic tariffs last February was too little and too late to rectify the position and a further substantial deficit is certain this year unless action is taken soon. This arises, to a significant extent, from the fact that domestic tariffs (unlike industrial tariffs) do not automatically reflect increases in the cost of power station fuel. We have no desire, however, to prejudice the critical discussions now taking place between the Government, the C.B.I. and the T.U.C. and have been asked by the Government to defer a decision on the extent and timing of any increase until the outcome of the present tripartite discussions is known.

"One factor in the record of the past year is particularly disturbing. While the domestic use of electricity increased by 7.3%, the use of electricity by industry declined by 2.6%. This decline was not confined to particular industries. This is the first time for 20 years that such a decline has taken place. The industrial use of electricity has been for many years a reasonably accurate indicator of industrial activity.

"Since the Budget in April, there has been a boom in the sale of consumer durables. Nevertheless, there has yet been no significant 'up turn' in the use of electricity. This, we believe to be due to the fact that investment in new plant has not taken place on a significant scale and that much of this boom has had to be met by imports.

"Our enquiries indicate quite clearly that for the last two or three years many industries have deferred investment or switched it elsewhere until an adequate return is more assured, cost inflation is brought

under control, and the inter-dependence of labour and management is more fully recognised.

"The combined effect of the last Budget and the new investment grants available under the Industry Act should certainly improve the climate for industrial expansion in Merseyside and North Wales, but industrial opinion is quite clear that sustained expansion without inflation can only be secured under two conditions (a) Improved viability providing the finance for expansion, and (b) Improved purchasing power (*not in self-cancelling inflationary terms*) but in real terms geared to expanding production.

"The financial situation of MANWEB and of Electricity Boards generally is symptomatic of the absence of these conditions (*not only in the supply industry but in the country as a whole*).

"It is earnestly hoped that the solution of our difficulties will soon be found in recognition and acceptance of these conditions by all concerned in the course of the tripartite talks now taking place."

The National Chairmen Said—

At a press conference in London, organised jointly by the Electricity Council and the CEGB, the main spokesmen were Sir Peter Menzies and Mr. Arthur Hawkins, respective chairmen of the Council and the Board.

The following points were included in their prepared statements:

SIR PETER MENZIES :

"This industry has been hard hit—indeed harder hit than most—by inflation—by other people's price increases. At the same time it has had to meet the Government's request that despite these cost increases our prices should be kept artificially low. The result is that I have the unhappy task of reporting a further loss in the year just ended of £23 million.

"It is true that the £23 million is less than half the previous year's deficit, but there is little joy to be obtained from that fact.

"The sadness of the situation from our point of view is that we have been translated in the last two years from 'the nationalised industry that always makes a profit' to yet another industry in danger of becoming a 'lame duck'—with all the burdens implicit in that for the taxpayer.

"We are particularly unhappy about the 'lame duck' situation on more than one count; it destroys

the healthy commercial basis on which we wish to operate (and we have been enjoined often enough to operate on a healthy commercial basis); it damages the morale of staff and management throughout the industry; and it only magnifies the problems that will have to be faced eventually.

"As far as manpower productivity is concerned our record is well above the national average. Wherever we have control of the situation we have made, and are continuing to make, the most strenuous efforts to increase our efficiency and cut our costs.

£165m Compensation Claim

"The financial situation could be remedied to some extent if our claim to the Government for compensation for loss of revenue because of price restraint could be agreed. We have claimed £165 million in this respect but this claim is still under discussion. I know the figure is a large one and this in itself is perhaps some measure of the problems we are dealing with, and of course a settlement in this area would not of itself deal with the financial difficulties that are accumulating for the future.

"At some time, and it ought to be sooner than later, electricity prices must be put right, or we will be left with a legacy that will continue to eat away at the performance of the industry. Again it is in the area of

our domestic tariffs that the problem is at its most acute.

"Domestic electricity prices have over the past few years increased by considerably less than other prices. So we are now in a situation where electricity for most of our domestic consumers is being sold to them below cost. I hardly need to spell out to you the financial consequences for the industry of this situation. Domestic electricity prices have been subjected to severe restraint for a period which is already too long—a restraint more severe and for a substantially longer period than has been applied to the goods and services of other industries.

"The plain fact of the matter is that we are carrying forward an ever-increasing tidal wave of domestic price increases, and every new delay adds to the distortions and lasting damage inflicted on our financial situation. None of this in the long run can be of any benefit to our consumers or the nation's economy as a whole.

"An obvious question at this stage will be: "By how much is electricity going up and from when?" And the simple answer is: "I do not know."

"The Minister for Trade and Industry has requested us to defer decisions on price adjustments until the outcome of the present tripartite discussions between Government, TUC and CBI. This, of course, follows on from the Government's request that the industry should postpone any tariff increases at least until the end of the present CBI price restraint initiative."

Mr. ARTHUR HAWKINS :

"The Generating Board made a £9 million profit in 1971/72 after paying interest of £185 million. Coming after a £14 million loss the previous year, it was a not unsatisfactory result in these hard financial times.

"In this Report, we are breaking new ground by forecasting the financial outlook for the current year . . . we are again aiming to earn a 7 per cent net return and this means earning a profit of over £20 million after paying interest.

"For the industry as a whole, the most damaging cost factor over the last couple of years has been the rise in fuel prices. This is not reflected in the Gener-

ating Board's results because of the fuel cost adjustment clause in our Bulk Supply Tariff but has nonetheless had an overwhelmingly adverse effect on the financial results of the industry as a whole.

"Let me make it clear that we are not anti-coal; on the contrary, we have a massive vested interest in coal and nothing would please us more than to see a strong, competitive coal industry in this country. But we are strongly against dear fuel, and, with few exceptions, coal is the dearest fuel for electricity generation.

Improved Efficiency

"We shall sustain the drive to cut costs by improving our own efficiency. Much has already been achieved, especially in the field of manpower productivity. This is a success story involving the whole of the industry, and I can best illustrate it by telling you what has happened in the Generating Board, who employ more than a third of the total number of industrial staff in the supply industry.

"In the last five years the Generating Board have reduced their industrial staff by more than a quarter—a cut-back of over 14,000. Over the same period, the salary bill for industrial staff has fallen in real terms, which is no mean achievement when one looks at the general experience of British industry.

"Whilst doing this in collaboration with the trade unions, we have brought about a great improvement in working arrangements and conditions within the industry. For example, since 1964, the normal hours of work of industrial staff have been reduced from 42 to 40 a week, and from being one of the heaviest overtime industries we have become just about the lowest.

"I believe that the real wealth of any business lies in the people who work for it. Our industry is immensely rich in this respect. This was clearly demonstrated last winter when the miners' strike created a unique peacetime crisis. Full power supplies were provided for much longer than many thought possible and during the fourth week of the strike we met a peak of almost 40 million kilowatts, the highest demand ever met in our history. The response of our staff was in the best traditions of public service.

MANWEB'S YEAR 1971/72

An illustrated summary of MANWEB'S Annual Report and Accounts for 1972 has been made available to all members of the Board's staff, and to the general public through MANWEB shops

The summary has been printed in both English and Welsh.

VETERANS OF THE ROAD

Mr. Nick Williams, who recently joined the Board as Assistant Solicitor has been keenly interested in vintage cars, or indeed old cars generally, since he was 14 or 15.

A member of the Chester Vintage Enthusiasts' Club for some 12 years, his first car was a 1933 Austin Seven, which he and a friend bought for £10, when he was 16. Unfortunately the advent of the M.O.T. testing procedures, and complete lack of cash to fix brakes and steering, meant one less Austin 7 on the road.

The Austin was followed by a Riley 9, then a Singer Le Mans. The Singer was basically a very good car, but distinguished itself by losing a front wheel outside Chester Town Hall, much to the consternation of a member of the local constabulary, who went to great lengths to point out that parking in the middle of Northgate Street was not allowed, and that the missing wheel contravened the Construction and Use Regulations, if nothing else.

Having sold the Singer to a man who wanted to rally it in North Wales on Forestry Commission land (and didn't mind the occasional lack of wheels), Nick acquired an open Riley tourer, and after that a 1928 Austin saloon of small performance and great dignity, known as "Albert." This was a magnificent car, which was known to carry six people, plus camping equipment, and tow a boat across the worst Snowdonia could offer, never failing to climb hills, but not being over-keen to stop on the way down them either!

At present, Nick has a 1928 Singer Junior tourer and an Austin 12. The Singer was bought in Black-

pool, having been restored by its previous owner to a very original state. The car has an overhead camshaft, which present manufacturers like to present as something developed direct from recent motor racing experience.

Nick also has a 1927 Singer chassis, which perhaps one day, with luck, he may get round to restoring. It certainly needs some restoring, having spent some 10 years gracing a local farmer's field, and it would appear that the farmer had hens in the field, as well as cows!

The Austin is daily transport, and can be seen every day on the car park at Head Office. Contrary to what at least one person at Head Office thought when Nick first arrived, it has not been dumped there by a local scrap merchant! On the contrary, despite the fact that it is usually in need of a wash, it has had only two owners from new, and was maintained from new, until Nick acquired it some 12 months ago, by the same engineer, at the same garage.

OUR COVER PICTURE seems to prove that you don't really need a super modern sports car to attract the ladies with Nick, admiring the much-cared-for Singer, are (*left to right*), Marilynne Jones, Marilyn Hamilton-Wood, Jean Lavender, Margaret Cooper, Susan Degg and Mair Davies, while Pat Fletcher shares the pilot's seat.

UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIPS

The electricity supply industry is again offering this year a number of university scholarships to school-leavers who wish to read full-time for an honours degree in electrical or mechanical engineering.

The scholarships—which are in addition to the large number of engineering traineeships offered by the industry—are awarded to help ensure that it maintains its share of the country's best elec-

trical and mechanical engineers, and thus its position in the forefront of technological progress.

The Central Electricity Generating Board offers scholarships in both mechanical and electrical engineering, while the Area Electricity Boards offer scholarships in electrical engineering only.

Boys and girls aged between 16 and 21, who expect to obtain in 1973 at least three 'A' level passes, including Mathematics

and Physics, are eligible to apply for one of the scholarships.

The awards provide for the payment of a maintenance grant of £555—£580 a year, according to the university chosen by the scholar, and all approved fees. No reduction is made on account of parents' income.

Details of the scheme and application forms have been sent to all schools with 'A' level students.

Talking Notes

MANWEB INVASION OF AMERICA

BACK from across the Atlantic are 106 members of the **MANWEB (Chester) Sports and Social Club**. The trip was organised by club secretary Mr. Gren Roberts.

The flight by Caledonian Airways jet was delayed in both directions, but did not spoil the holidays of the MANWEB travellers.

The destination of the aircraft was the modern Toronto Airport in Ontario, Canada, but the destination of the passengers seemed to be most parts of the vast North American continent. One couple hired a motorised caravan which had its own TV, shower and toilet. They covered over 3,000 miles of Canadian and United States roads.

Another couple covered 17,000 miles, travelling as far south as Texas. Niagara Falls, Montreal, Quebec, Winnipeg, Calgary and Vancouver were just a few of the famous names on the itinerary of our tourists.

After three weeks of meeting new people, seeing old friends and visiting emigrant relatives in their new land, the visitors made their way back to Toronto by plane, train, car and bus, where they were boarded in a first class hotel for the night owing to a delay in their return flight.

Finally their holiday of a lifetime ended at head office in Chester in the early hours of the morning.

Calling Cricket Fans

After another busy playing season the cricket section of the Thingwall Road, Liverpool, sports and social club recently held their A.G.M., when Messrs. **Malcolm Cooper** and **Albert Eyres** of our Liverpool District were re-elected Chairman and vice-Chairman respectively.

With teams in both divisions of the Merseyside Cricket Association, the club is constantly on the look-out for new members. The second team headed their division of the Association last year.

Any MANWEB employee either working or living in Liverpool—or further afield, for that matter, is assured of a warm welcome, even if he is only a novice. Regular evening net practice is held at Thingwall Road during the summer, and it is hoped to carry this on at a local night school during the winter months.

The social side of things is not forgotten, and the section will be holding a dance at the Club on Saturday, November 25th. A late bar has been applied for and the Merseyside Jazz Band will supply the music.

Tickets (35p) can be obtained from Malcolm or Albert (internal phones Lister Drive 763 and 721), and they will be pleased to receive inquiries

from anyone interested in joining the club's ranks.

Charity Windfall

After a recent talk on the Board's work by **Mr. C. S. Evans**, District Sales Supervisor, Dee Valley, members of the Neston women's "Over 21" club were so pleased that they proposed an honorarium to the speaker.

As a result the Electrical and Electronic Industries' Benevolent Association have benefited by the club's donation!

Table Tennis Champs!

Winners of the annual table tennis knock-out competitions held at Head Office recently are pictured here with **Mr. Richard Gales**, Sports and Social Club Chairman.

Double winner of the scratch and handicap competitions was **Mr. Hugh Farrow**. He beat **Mr. Reuben Perry** in the former contest and **Mr. Roy Bevan** in the latter. **Mrs. Chris Byrne**, paired with Reuben Perry, won the doubles competition by beating **Mr. Nigel Crossley** and **Mr. Keith Roberts**.

Left to right: Messrs. Gales and Farrow, Mrs. Byrne and Mr. Perry.



Energy Sales Nightmare

We thought it was really just one of those standing jokes—but the staff at our Corwen shop swear that it really happened!

This little old lady—so they say—came into the shop brandishing her electricity account, and saying that she could not possibly owe the money because she hadn't used any electricity.

Mrs. E. M. Archer, one of the staff on duty at the time, was a little sceptical about this, and on being pressed the customer admitted that she had after all used the supply so that she could see to fill her oil lamp!

We are reminded of another tale—also sworn, hand-on-heart, to be true, about another little old lady somewhere in Anglesey who, in the

hey-day of the rural electrification programme was told how the men from MANWEB would fix a nice electric light to her kitchen ceiling.

Couldn't she have it a little lower down, she asked. "Perhaps, but why" was the reply.

Well, it appeared that the lady was not so spry as she used to be, and her arthritis would make it difficult for her to hop on to a table and chair to light the lamp every night!

Birkenhead Emigrants

Anyone might be excused, on looking at the records referring to our third assistant engineers in North Wirral District, for thinking that the District was a training school for sending electrical engineers to the farthest corners of the universe.

First there was **Raymond Brown**, 3rd assistant service engineer, who "went to Mars"—not, of course, the planet, but the makers of sticky chocolate bars, at Slough. He was followed by **John Kelly**, who in due course joined him at the same cosmic-sounding destination.

Soon afterwards **Rod Burrows**, 3rd assistant energy sales engineer, packed his bags and departed for Johannesburg, South Africa, and the man who replaced him, **Peter Haynes**, was not long before he caught a flight to take up a job in Bermuda.

The last North Wirral migrant was **Roy Austin** (3rd assistant installation engineer) who recently took wings to a job in Kenya.

So if you hear stories of a stow-away on some future moon expedition, you'll know where he came from!

CLWYD'S SAILING DEMONSTRATOR

Mrs. Lesley Taylor, energy sales demonstrator of Clwyd District has been a member of Llandudno Sailing Club for twelve years and has spent much of this time crewing in 'Mirror' dinghys. She is pictured here with her five year old daughter, Susanne, who looks like 'following in mother's footsteps', for Susanne has been sailing for two years.



1973 Trade Fair

Next year's **Electric Living Trade Fair**, to be held at Harrogate from January 30th to February 1st, 1973, will be the biggest yet. There will be 147 exhibitors taking up 48,300 sq. ft. of stand space, which is 16 more exhibition stands and 10,000 sq. ft. more stand space than last year. All the space has been let and there is a short waiting list. It is Europe's largest annual exhibition devoted solely to electrical appliances.

The Fair is organised by The Electricity Council in conjunction with its Electricity Marketing Conference, and is attended by Electricity Board commercial and marketing staffs and the electrical wholesale and retail trade as well as buyers from several overseas countries.

The Fair gives manufacturers of electrical appliances and associated products and services the opportunity to meet the men and women who buy and sell their products and to show them their latest equipment. Emphasis is placed on showing appliances introduced since the previous Fair.

University Breaks

The electricity supply industry will be holding five **Spring and Summer Schools** next year—three at Cambridge and one each at Durham and Loughborough.

There will be 100 places available at each of the schools, which provide a first-class opportunity for employees of the industry to discuss progress and plans, hear of new developments, and exchange ideas—all in a setting offering relaxation and social harmony.

Half the places are reserved for the industry's industrial staff, and selection of students is made by

District Joint Advisory Councils on recommendation from Local Advisory Committees.

All expenses are met by electricity boards, normal pay is maintained, plus a daily allowance of 50p.

Notice Board posters give detailed information on how to apply for a rewarding and instructive change of scene and an educational break from the daily round.

Married at Rhostyllen

Congratulations to **Mr. Emyr Miles** and his bride **Miss Nester Parry** who were married recently at Rhostyllen Parish Church.



Mr. and Mrs. Miles

Emyr is a records draughtsman at Head Office and Nester was formerly a typist at Rhostyllen. After the ceremony the couple left for a honeymoon on the Isle of Man.



What's all this then?—Well, it so happened that Granada TV wanted to make a feature film about Chester, but the problem of taking pictures at Row level posed a bit of a problem, we were able to help out with the hire of a street lighting maintenance tower wagon, which proved to be the perfect answer to the problem.

Moves to Chester

Friends and colleagues of **Mr. John Ashton**, general assistant engineer at North Mersey District, gathered at District office recently to wish him good luck on his departure for Head Office at Chester, to take up the post of 4th assistant engineer (technical).

John has been working at Marsh Lane since March, and prior to that was in the Liverpool District, being one of those involved in the frantic round of switching operations during the fuel crises created by the coal strike.

On behalf of his colleagues he was

presented with a lighter by **Mr. A. A. W. Hawley**, District Engineer.

Appreciation

The following letter from a farmer in Llanfagan, Caernarvon, was received recently at our **Gwynedd District Office**.

"Just a short note to thank you for all your efforts on our behalf to get the electricity meter installed . . . after waiting for so long for the local contractors to do something about the matter, it has been a great pleasure for us to deal with someone like yourself . . ."

(Signed)

FAREWELL LADIES

Two popular members of Head Office staff left the Board recently. *Right*, Mrs. Sheila Hinks-Edwards, seated, with fellow engineering secretaries, Mrs. Linda Droughton, Miss Olive Hall and Miss Margaret Jones.

Below: Mr. Eddy Lunt says good-bye to Mrs. Chris Davies, presenting her with gifts on behalf of her Registry colleagues.



BIG INCREASES IN NATIONAL APPLIANCE SALES FIGURES

Large increases in the sales of most domestic electrical appliances through Electricity Board shops were recorded in the quarter ended June, 1972.

Figures released by The Electricity Council show that, compared with the similar quarter of 1971, washing machine sales were up by 86.0%, refrigerators by 21.6%, food freezers by 46.5% and vacuum cleaners by 65.2%. Customer interest in these appliances remained high following easing of credit restrictions last year and this was aided by Area Board promotions. All these appliances also showed big increases in sales in the 12-month period to June, compared with the previous year.

Sales of clothes dryers, 33.1% higher than the corresponding quarter of the previous year have shown a steadily rising growth rate, indicating the growing popularity of tumbler dryers, which are included in these figures.

Cooker sales were down by 3.0%—but this compares with the previous quarter when sales were down by 18.0%—and indications are that sales are picking up again.

Storage radiator sales dropped by 12.5% over the quarter, but there are indications that a greater share of storage radiator sales are now being made by other retailers and contractors.

	Quarter ended June 1972		Year ended June 1972	
	Total	% change over previous year	Total	% change over previous year
Cookers	141,258	— 3.0	564,680	— 4.5
Water Heaters :				
Immersion	33,466	— 0.4	125,661	+ 2.1
Self-Contained	11,861	+ 5.5	44,480	— 1.5
Washing Machines	59,877	+ 86.0	230,041	+ 57.3
Refrigerators	121,062	+ 21.6	400,748	+ 31.7
Food Freezers	18,889	+ 46.5	62,739	+ 59.2
Clothes Dryers	19,689	+ 33.1	125,495	+ 16.0
Storage Radiators	63,018	— 12.5	490,862	— 3.5
Vacuum Cleaners	88,942	+ 65.2	304,232	+ 37.9

Obituary

Mr. GEORGE HOLMES

It is with deep regret that we record the recent death of Mr. George Kenneth Holmes, supervisor of the printing unit at Head Office at Chester. He was 47.

Mr. Holmes had worked for MANWEB all his life, first as a clerk and later in the printing unit, which he took charge of when it was located at Pumpfields, in Liverpool. On the move to Chester Mr. Holmes became

supervisor of the large modern print unit responsible for supplying a large proportion of the forms and other documents so essential to the workings of an organisation dealing with such an enormous public.

Although his health had not been of the best recently, he continued to carry out his work, and his untimely death came only a few days after he and his wife celebrated their silver

wedding anniversary.

Among his hobbies and interests were numbered watch and clock repairing, gardening and photography.

George Holmes was a familiar and respected figure at Head Office, widely popular for his quiet friendliness and courteous efficiency. On behalf of all those who will miss him we extend sincere sympathy to his wife and mother.



Miss Richardson, surrounded by her colleagues

Miss IRENE RICHARDSON

Miss Irene Richardson, a stores accounts clerk at Head Office, retired recently after 31 years' service to the industry.

Miss Richardson, who lives at Formby, Lancashire, joined the industry in 1941 at Formby, and moved to the former Area 1 accounts office at Derby House, Liverpool, on nationalisation.

With the merger of the Area and Head Office she

moved to Chester in 1970.

She has many interests, including Scottish dancing, gardening, painting and motoring, so will not find time hanging heavily on her hands—in fact, one of her first ambitions is to take an advanced driver's test!

On behalf of her many friends she was presented with a gold chain by Mr. R. J. Barraclough (assistant Chief Accountant, admin.).

RETIREMENTS

DOUBLE DEPARTURE FROM RHOSTYLLEN

Miss NAN JONES—Miss EVELYN JAMES

Two members of Rhostyllen accounts staff retired from the Board when the rest moved to Head Office in the final phase of the transfer of the accounts to computer operation.

Mrs. Nan Jones, in her fortieth year of service, who retired from her position as accounting machine supervisor, started work as a clerk with the North

Wales Power Company, became a comptometer operator and finally took charge of the accounting machine section.

Outside working hours she spends her time in amateur dramatics and doing needle work. She is about to learn to drive in her husband's Volvo! Her husband is former purchasing officer at Rhostyllen, Mr. Harold Jones.

Mr. John Myers, Miss James, Miss Jones and Mr. Helliwell, with accounts department colleagues



Mrs. Evelyn James has been with the Board for 23 years doing the same job on the same machine in the section supervised by Mrs. Jones. Her interests outside the office revolve around her church and village life.

Group Manager, Mr. K. Helliwell presented Mrs. Jones with a cheque with which she has since purchased a beautiful wine decanter. Mrs. James received a foodmixer at the same presentation ceremony.

Mr. FRED SMITH

Mr. Fred Smith, storekeeper clerk at Aberystwyth District office, retired on September 20th on reaching the age of 65 after 22 years, service with the Board. Mr. J. O. Hughes, higher clerical assistant, presented Fred with a wallet of notes on behalf of his many friends in the Aberystwyth District. Fred thanked his friends and invited them to Skegness where he has bought a bungalow. His former colleagues wish Fred and Mrs. Smith good health and happiness in the years to come.

Mr. W. A. PERKINS

Another of MANWEB's dwindling band of very-long-serving employees retired recently when Mr. William A. Perkins, chargehand installation inspector at Liverpool District, said "farewell" to his very many MANWEB friends after 49 years' service to the industry.

"Billy" began his apprenticeship at Lister Drive Power Station way back in 1923, later transferring to substation work and completing his apprenticeship on the installation side.

Following this he served with the installations and "change-over" sections, and in 1932 was promoted to the meter department as an inspector/fixer at

Highfield Street, Liverpool.

After war service he returned to the industry as installation inspector, and was later promoted to chargehand.

Billy has long associations with the Sports and Social Club at Thingwall Road, having played in the snooker and billiards teams and done sterling work over the years in helping to organise the popular children's Christmas parties.

On behalf of his colleagues he was presented with an electric drill with various accessories, together with their good wishes for a long and happy retirement for himself and his wife, Dorothy.

Mr. Perkins (left) receives his gift from Mr. R. I. Jowett (D.C.E.)





Above: Vincent Whittingham is pictured working at his bench.

Above, right: Eyes down for a test, under the supervision of Instructor Mr. Colin Roberts.

Below, left: Instructor Mr. John Bailey does a tool check with apprentice Gary Taylor.

Below, right: Wiring a socket outlet is apprentice Colin Thomas with senior instructor Mr. John Seymour.



SETTLING IN

Every September a few dozen privileged young men—chosen from several hundred applicants—are selected for craft apprenticeship training with MANWEB, and a few weeks ago this year's new boys joined the Board and began their working lives at our Training Centre at Hoylake.

During their four-year apprenticeships the 61 youngsters will receive theoretical and practical training and instruction which will lead to most of them becoming fully-qualified tradesmen, while some may do even better and progress to becoming student engineers.

For some of the boys, hard work at this early and most important stage of their career,

at the Training Centre, at night school, and on "day release," could lead to university degrees. It has happened several times previously, so the opportunities are there for those able and keen enough to grasp them.

Of the 61 boys, 52 wish to become electricians, three have ambitions to becoming communications electricians, three electrical fitters, two motor vehicle mechanics, and one a meter mechanic.

All of them will be at Hoylake for 40 weeks, with the exception of the two prospective motor mechanics, who will spend 13 weeks at the Centre.

Time is spent in each of the sections at the Centre, and the





AT HOYLAKE

lads are given a first-class grounding in the use of tools and equipment; learning the basic essentials of their chosen speciality.

Quite a few of the boys hail from far-flung parts of the MANWEB area, and arrangements are made for them to live at the homes of a number of kindly landladies in the Hoylake area—ladies who have become accustomed over the years to making the lads from MANWEB feel at home, and who know all about the hearty appetites of healthy teenagers.

In charge at the centre is Mr. Ron Slack, with a staff of ten permanent instructors who are qualified and experienced in teaching the craftsmen of the

future. As well as teaching the ins-and-outs of electrical and mechanical craftsmanship, the staff keep a friendly eye on the boys' general health and welfare, offering friendship and advice over the various problems facing young people leaving home to live for the first time.

After spending their first year at Hoylake, the boys usually return to their home Districts to complete their apprenticeships with practical work in the company of experienced craftsmen, but the first-year boys are not the only MANWEB people to benefit from training at Hoylake, as there are courses also for the older lads and various categories of adult tradesmen.



Top left: Mark O'Donoghue gets to grips with an electric cooker, aided by Instructor Mr. M. R. Grisenthwaite. In the foreground is Colin Mogridge.

Top right: Peter McVeigh getting to know the working parts of an electric cooker.

Bottom left: Three future MANWEB tradesmen. *From the left,* David Loyley, John Marsh and Leslie Mather.

Bottom right: Glyn Mobley strips down a cooker.



Settling in at Hoylake—

SAFETY FIRST



Safety precautions are all important when handling tools and equipment, especially when it is for the first time. At Hoylake, posters, like the one behind Robert Woods (*top right*), adorn the walls. Instructors are at hand to see that safety is put first. When working with a drill, *top left*, Graham Weaver tucks his long hair under a net.

Bottom left: Instructor Mr. Stephen Ennion watches as Raymond Wright adjusts his lathe (note the safety goggles to the right and the sleeves rolled up).

Should anything go wrong the lads receive first aid instruction from Mr. Tom Poole, *bottom right*, and at his instruction Derek Povall tries a little artificial respiration on Walter Ward.

