

# Contact

October 1978



Shooting the Steps  
(see page 204)



An informal discussion group at one of the 1978 sessions.

# Spring and Summer Schools

## —A CHANCE OF A LIFETIME

Every year around 500 employees of the electricity supply industry—people doing all kinds of jobs in all kinds of locations—are lucky enough to spend a week at one of the Spring or Summer Schools organised by the Electricity Council.

Each school consists of a programme of talks and discussion on the industry, its problems and its plans, with speakers from management and trade unions. But the schools are much more than a series of lectures—the emphasis is on informal discussion

and frank exchanges of views, while social and sporting activities do much to create a 'holiday' atmosphere.

The experiences and reactions of MANWEB 'students' have been reported in *Contact* over the years. And everyone contains the same message—"If you get the chance—grab it! It's the chance of a lifetime!"

The schools, held at leading colleges and universities during the Spring and Summer vacations, make use of the excellent educational, recreational and catering facilities available. You apply and are nominated by your LAC—all expenses, and allowances are paid by the Board, in addition to normal salary.

### THE SPRING AND SUMMER SCHOOLS FOR 1979

Below are listed the colleges and dates of courses for the 1979 series of Spring and Summer Schools.

University of Technology, Loughborough  
28th March to 4th April and  
4th April to 11th April

University of North Wales, Bangor  
4th July to 11th July

Corpus Christi College, Cambridge  
5th Sept. to 12th Sept. and  
12th Sept. to 19th Sept.

If you are interested then get in touch with your LAC representative NOW. If you have previously applied without success, TRY AGAIN! Persistence pays.

More informality, just one of the social gatherings at the school.



# Contact

THE STAFF MAGAZINE  
OF THE  
MERSEYSIDE AND  
NORTH WALES  
ELECTRICITY BOARD

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On other  
pages . . .

Chester Canoe Club	204
Industrial Exhibition	205
Microwave Ovens	208
Energy Sales Appointment	209
Talking Notes	210
Board at Dinorwic	214
C.C.O. moves	216
Obituary	216
Man of Magic	217
Chester M.P. at Head Office	218
U.H.F. Radios in Liverpool	219
Vigilance can save lives	220

## COMMON INTERESTS

THE ECONOMIC health of modern industrial society can be measured to a large extent by its demand for electricity. When business is booming electricity undertakings must reinforce their networks. When recession comes the climate is plainly reflected in static or declining sales of electricity.

Nowhere is this picture more clear than in the Merseyside and North Wales area, where industrial stagnation has been reflected in a 'no growth' situation as far as sales of electricity to industry are concerned.

Dependent as we are on the buoyancy of industry and commerce, the reverse side of the coin is stamped with equal clarity. Every production line, every industrial process and commercial activity, calls for a reliable and economic supply of electricity.

Everyone wants to see a resurgent economy in our industrial areas, bringing in its train expanding production, shrinking dole queues, and better standards of living which will be reflected in a rising domestic demand for electricity—the yardstick of "the good life" in the home.

In circumstances such as these all concerned have a common interest in overcoming the obstacles which confront us. Industry needs electricity, and if we have the know-how to help it regain the path of expansion and progress then it is our job to make that expertise universally available and widely recognised.

This is the thinking which lies behind our *Service to Industry and Commerce* exhibition, reported in this number of *Contact*.

### Editorial Staff

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

# CHESTER CANOE CLUB

An addition to the Chester Sports and Social Club is a newly formed Canoe Section. The 16 members range from complete beginners to experts.

Our cameraman visited a recent training session at the magnificent Arena Leisure Pool in Chester, and on the River Dee. Arena coach Mr. Paul Banks has given the beginners and novices a course of tuition to build their confidence and handling of canoes.

A second course is about to start in Chester.

Interested lads or lasses should contact secretary David Booth on Head Office 2425.

## COVER PICTURE

Phil Curry manoeuvres his canoe down the 'steps' at the River Dee weir, Chester.



Our pictures show the canoeists practising and below with instructor Paul Banks, standing, the club are, from the left, Dave Ferguson, Rob Hallows, Marion Barlow, Heather O'Brien, Pam Holland, Phil Curry, Dave Evans, John Benton, Phil Robinson, Bill Rogers, Nick Gill, Brian Rogers and Dafydd Evans.





John Edwards (2nd engineer—Technical Services) talks to a group of visitors who toured the colourful and informative stands at the exhibition.

## Exhibition of Manweb's Service to Industry and Commerce

### **BOB CRYER, MP PRAISES BOARD'S INITIATIVE**

ATTRACTIVE, well-designed, neat and descriptive stands and display units at MANWEB's comprehensive exhibition "Service to Industry and Commerce" held recently at Runcorn, highlighted some of the many ways in which electricity can be used to make more efficient use of manpower, plant and factory space. More than a thousand selected and interested customers responded to the Board's invitation to see the presentation.

A specially invited audience of top management from over 100 major industrial organisations, representing a group of MANWEB customers with a demand of over 1,100 MW consuming 5,400 million units a year—75% of the Board's total industrial sales—attended a preview of the exhibition when they were able to meet MANWEB staff and special guest, Mr. Bob Cryer, M.P., Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Industry.

Emphasising the importance of the event, Mr. Matt Cowan (*Chief Commercial Officer*) said, "You are our biggest customers and your activities have an important effect on the prosperity of the region and on the fortunes of so many of its inhabitants.

Interested visitors at the exhibition were able to discuss their problems and projects with experts on the Board's and manufacturers' stands. Here we see a discussion taking place on the Isopad Ltd. exhibit.



"But the full extent of our services and the assistance we can give to industrialists is not always fully understood, hence the reason we are promoting these services at the exhibition."

He went on to talk of the future—"even though it can rarely be determined with precision!" He spoke of the recent slow down in world wide economic growth which in turn delayed the predicted fuel shortage and associated price escalation. "In some ways", he went on, "this deferment may be dangerous as it can lead to complacency."

"Although the early forecasters got their dates wrong, it is my opinion that the transfer from oil and gas to electricity must commence this century."

Mr. Cowan went on to suggest that electrical processes should be taken into account when the subject of plant replacement came up. Those continuing to use oil and gas should accept that conversion costs may have to be incurred at a later date.

He tied these comments in to the very necessary requirements of resource conservation—"the 'in' term being energy conservation"—by saying that many electrical processes reduce fuel requirements, others improve the quality of the end product and yet others reduce the demand for other resources such as materials and labour. Some electrical processes achieve all three!

In bringing his remarks to a close, Mr. Cowan told his audience that, quite naturally MANWEB was greatly interested in the success of industry in the Merseyside and North Wales area.

"I hope that all who visit our exhibition will be reminded to consider electrical alternatives at the outset of any new project and will relate this to long-term needs for competitiveness as well as the need to

be preparing for the forecast change in the fuel situation later this century.

"The prosperity of the region depends on you—and we hope that we in MANWEB can be of service."

Mr. Bob Cryer, praised the Board for staging the event saying, "I am pleased to see this sort of initiative in public enterprise. The Government is keen to support such initiative in this area, and I am particularly pleased to see that MANWEB has been able to demonstrate a service to industry as it encourages manufacturers to come here."

"It's important for industrialists who are considering moving their companies to this area, and local manufacturers who are considering further investment, to know that they will get specialised industrial service. I am sure that this exhibition helps breed confidence in the area."

Mr. Cryer went on to speak about energy conservation—"a matter which the country will be talking about more and more during the next 10 or 15 years."

#### Methods Demonstrated

He said: "I am pleased to see methods of energy conservation demonstrated at this exhibition because energy conservation means efficient plant. More efficient plant means more viable companies and more viable companies means more secure jobs, so it is clear that MANWEB is very concerned with the future of this region."

In conclusion he commented: "If, from this exhibition, industry is made more efficient then we are in a better position when North Sea Oil starts to run out."

MANWEB Deputy Chairman Mr. Richard Gales emphasised that the exhibition showed clearly how electrical technology can make industry more

MANWEB demonstrators, Elizabeth Owen (Liverpool) and Jane Fairclough (Mid-Mersey) on the Board's special catering exhibit which featured the bargain priced commercial kitchen (at £5,500!) which is designed to cater for up to 100 people.



efficient. "We in MANWEB have some knowledge of the amount of industrial investment in our area, and the picture is not all grey!"

The exhibition featured heat recovery, air conditioning lighting, radiation heating and drying, hot water and steam raising, metal sheathed elements and process liquid heating, convection ovens, surface heating, research and development, electrical installation and service, and load management. A separate section featured a special catering exhibit centred on an extremely economical package kitchen suitable for the needs of a small industrial factory catering for up to 100 people. The capital outlay for all the sparkling equipment was only £5,500—plus VAT!

Our team of Commercial staff, from the young trainee demonstrators who joined us only a matter of weeks before the exhibition opened, to the Chief Commercial Officer, are to be congratulated on their individual and collective efforts in promoting and staging this excellent show.

**ORGANISERS:—**

The huge success of the exhibition is due to the dedicated work put in by all members of our Commercial staff, on this occasion led by Ernest Redman, Malcolm Whalley and Roger Glover from our Energy Sales—Industrial section at Head Office.



*Above: Special guest Bob Cryer, M.P., shows keen interest in the demonstration work being carried out by John Crawford, left, last year's Best All-Round Apprentice at Hoylake, and Ron Hughes, who completed his apprenticeship a few days prior to the exhibition opening.*  
*Left: On the busy information stand, we had three new members of the Board's staff, from left to right: Helen Wilson, Margaret Boyle and Cerys Jones who all did a very competent job despite being thrown in at the deep end!*





Test engineer Tom Owen, left, assisted by John Whittle, checks a microwave oven for leakage, with negative results.

## Microwave Ovens —the Safest Way to Cook

*Question:* Are microwave ovens safe?

*Answer:* Yes!

Now that is not a hasty retort, but a carefully considered and unequivocal confirmation of the confidence MANWEB have in the safety of this type of appliance which is sold through the Board's shops. This confidence is based on the Electricity Council's findings at their Leatherhead Test Laboratory plus the findings of our own Test Lab at Queensferry.

Over the last few weeks the MANWEB Test Engineers, headed by Senior Engineer Jim Lornie, have completed a series of exhaustive tests on a batch of new microwave ovens by various manufacturers. Six new models were actually tested by the team and 2nd engineer Tom Owen who carried out the tests, commented, "Each oven has met with our full approval from a safety aspect, and which models the Board sell will be purely a marketing decision. Yes, we checked thoroughly for microwave leakage, and the meter records levels as low as a 100th of the permitted level. In each case we were unable to get any reading."

Needless to say Tom checked to see if the meter was in fact working. He pointed to the last of the batch of ovens which was still on the test bench and

offered to repeat the test for us. It was a Sharp oven, into which he placed a dish of water. He switched on and produced his meter to check for microwave leakage. He passed the meter over the oven and along the seams, outlet, and around the door. The needle never flickered.

A plastic cone was fitted to the front of the meter to ensure it was kept the correct test distance away. Tom Owen removed this cap and repeated the test with the meter actually flush with the oven and the likely leakage spots—again not a flicker.

The microwave oven is a technical breakthrough in the cooking market, and as with all new inventions and ideas it collects its "knockers". It happened with the luminous watch—scaremongering stemmed sales with the fear of radiation from the dials. Television suffered a similar fate, and more recently the quartz watch has been added to the list of unfounded fears.

Recent publicity on TV and in the press has turned the spotlight on the so called 'dangers' of microwave ovens. A current affairs programme on television assembled the facts giving both sides of the argument, but as current affairs programmes compete for viewers in an entertainment medium, the sensational approach is given prominence, this time

leaving viewers with an unbalanced view of the safety of microwave ovens.

The newspapers picked up the unbalanced argument publishing the sensational, but false, bad news—for good news is not news, and inferred that users of microwave cookers were courting disaster, despite the fact that medical evidence given on the original TV show contradicted these conclusions which were later corrected as mis-statement of fact.

The fact is that no other form of cooking is as safe as microwave. Whether it be gas, electric or solid fuel cookers, you could, if you were careless or daft enough, place your hand in an oven and cook it. Chip pans, boiling liquids and hot grills, plates or rings are all familiar hazards and a constant source of danger. The only real exclusion from the list of cooking appliances which could cause burns is the microwave oven, because there is no way you will be able to come into contact with the cooking process. There are three separate safety devices which operate independently and cut off the power should the door be opened.

The cooking utensils recommended for this type of cooking are made of glass, plastic or china, and are completely unaffected by the microwaves, so they do not heat up in the oven. Only the food gets hot and some conducted heat makes the dishes warm, so you cannot burn your fingers taking cooking out of the oven.

What then are microwaves, and how does the cooker work?

Microwaves are a form of electromagnetic energy, similar in many respects to radio waves, and light waves. Like radio waves they are produced by a transmitter or magnetron, and sent by an 'aerial' to their receiver. In the case of radio waves this is a radio set, where the waves are converted into sound. With a microwave oven the top of the oven is the directional aerial, sending waves inward to the receiver—the food—where they are used up, being

converted into heat. The whole oven is encased in a screen which prevents microwaves escaping.

One final word on the safety aspect. Supposing the virtually impossible happened and microwaves up to the maximum safety level escaped. Their strength drops so rapidly the further they are from the source, that at arm's length they would be down to one 500th of the permitted level, in the same way that a candle loses its lighting power the further you are from the flame.

#### Versatility

The microwave oven is such a versatile companion in any kitchen. It operates from a 13 amp plug, so it can in fact be used anywhere in the home. Most people are aware that it will quickly thaw frozen food, reheating it in minutes ready for the table. It is also an ideal method of cooking, and some experimenting will enable the housewife to cut the time and energy involved in many time-consuming chores.

It takes a minute to melt chocolate for topping cakes (using only a bowl), soften butter straight from the 'fridge or freezer for spreading or baking, or heating jam jars to get the last spot of jam out easily.

When scrupulous hygiene is needed—for baby's bottle or Dad's home brewing or winemaking, use the oven. Make a quick milk drink, place a mug or cup of milk in the oven for a minute, take it out, add coffee or chocolate and there are no pans to wash.

The cost of running a microwave oven compared with any other method of cooking is negligible. The load of the largest models is around 1000 watts, so it only uses one unit per hour, just under 3p, although the longest period it is likely to be in use is for about 30 minutes for a complete meal.

So you can add economy to the list of attributes of microwave ovens.

## Energy Sales Engineer Appointed

Mr. Terry Keenan, 1st engineer in the Mid-Cheshire District Energy Sales Section, has been appointed as the Energy Sales Engineer, North Wirral District.

He joined the Board as a craft apprentice at the Hoylake Training Centre 14 years ago, transferring to student engineer after 12 months. He gained an Honours

Degree at Salford University, and after a period in Liverpool District gained his Masters Degree in Science at Loughborough College, his subject being Electroheat.

He returned to MANWEB as a 2nd engineer in the Head Office Industrial Development Section, moving as a 1st engineer to Mid-Cheshire last year.

Terry is 30, he is married, and he and wife Jackie have three children, a girl and two boys. He enjoys reading, photography and playing squash, and is a founder member of the MANWEB squash team.

Mr. Terry Keenan



# Talking Notes

## MASTER GARDENER

A man who really knows his onions, and for that matter most other garden vegetables, is New Crane Street storekeeper **Samuel Jones**. Away from his job in Dee Valley District he has been winning prizes at local horticultural shows for his homegrown produce.

He started competing 12 years ago and has a drawer full of prizewinning cards to testify to his success. His proudest moment was in his local show this year, when he won the Burton and Rossett Horticultural Society's Challenge Cup, for the top gardener

of the show. His exhibits won eight 1st prizes, four 2nd and one 3rd, to give him top points.

One of his first prizes was for a display of three flower blooms and three different vegetables, which brought him the title of Webb's Master Gardener. The previous week

he had won a similar title at the Rhostyllen Show.

Top quality seed, plenty of good 'muck,' and careful tending is Sam's recipe for success. His small Rossett garden is crammed full of straight rows of tall chrysanthemums, huge runner bean plants, massive onions, with lettuce seedlings growing in odd corners.

In addition to his home garden he tends 1½ allotments, where the majority of vegetables are grown. He spends about three hours a night and most of his weekends tending his crops and preparing for shows.

Sam, who is 53, is married, and he and his wife Lilian have two sons, one of whom is married with a young daughter, making Sam a grand-dad. He has worked for MANWEB for about 13 years, and as if his hobby in the garden was not enough he serves as a councillor on the Allington Community Council.

### Welsh Water-Ski Coach

An administrative assistant in the Head Office Stores Section, **Steve Manning**, has been appointed the National Coach for the Welsh Region of the British Water-Ski Federation.

He took up the sport some fifteen years ago when his then ten year old daughter, Gaynor, watched skiers skimming the waves on the South Coast and decided that was for her.

Dad read up on the sport,



Sam Jones pictured with some of his prize winning produce, the challenge cup and certificates proclaiming him Master Gardener.

For results like these, you need good seed, careful tending, and plenty of good 'muck'.

took lessons and himself became proficient, at the slalom, tricks and jumping, and coached Gaylor who went on to win the South West and Southern Championships. Before her marriage she too, worked for MANWEB in the Head Office Display Section.

Son Stephen is also a keen skier making it quite an aquatic family with Kathleen, Steve's wife attending to all the chores, although not skiing herself she plays an important part in the family sport.

You need to be young and tough to succeed at the sport and Steve is on the lookout for likely youngsters from the age of ten. With good coaching they should be competing for top honours by the time they are 15 or 16.

There are four disciplines in water skiing, slalom—weaving in and out of a series of buoys, tricks—as the name suggest performing a variety of antics on one or two skis, and barefoot—which really is for the young and toughies, no skis are used even for 'getting up'.

At 57 Steve reckons that is not for him, although he regularly competes in veterans events, for slalom, tricks and jumps—the fourth discipline where a skier hits a steep ramp and leaps as far as possible before his skis hit the water.

A more recent event is ski-racing, in which skiers are timed over a set course, and the faster the time the better. In their first attempt Steve's Welsh squad beat teams from other regions and won the national cup. He is now building a team of barefoot competitors which he intends will again beat the rest of Britain.

You are never too old to start water skiing but the younger the better if you wish to make any mark in the sport. Most people manage to 'get

up' after their second or third attempt, and a little coaching and you into an exhilarating sport.

### Reluctant Beauty

What started as a night out to celebrate the life membership of her Taid—that's Welsh for Grand-Dad, of the British Legion, ended with **Lynne Williams** being elected Miss Gwersyllt British Legion 1978.

Lynne, who is 20, is married and she and husband Martin



Mrs. Lynne Williams.

were in a party of family and friends with Councillor Len Higgins who had been made a life member of the association. The company persuaded Lynne to enter the contest, and finally she agreed just for a giggle.

She won the contest and goes forward to the next round competing against winners from other British Legions in the area.

Lynne is an accounts clerk in the Debt Recovery Section at Head Office, having worked for the Board for the past 3½ years.

To keep her slender figure in trim she goes dancing and enjoys a game of Badminton.

She also likes to cook and read.

### Head Office Cricket

Cricket was badly hit by the weather this season, and four of the Head Office team's 14 fixtures in the Chester and District Midweek League were washed out. Of the remaining ten, four were won and six lost.

**Mike Boxall** took over the responsibilities of captain, and in the 10 games played a total of 23 players were selected, demonstrating the need for an adequate pool. It was particularly helpful to have players like **John Thompson, Emyr Jones, Chris Norrey** and **Emyr Hughes** available—

players who, while not always guaranteed a place, were ready to step into the breach when necessity arose. Prospects for next season are regarded as bright if it proves possible to add one or two more experienced players to the pool during the close season.

Top of the batting averages (minimum 4 innings) was **Mike Boxall**, with a figure of 26.25, while **Bev Johns** topped the bowling (over 10 overs) with 11 wickets for 102 runs (average 9.3), although **Amlyn ab Iorwerth** took 16 wickets for an average of 14.9.

### The Electron Players

Following the resignation of **Mr. Sidney Costin** as chairman of the *Electron Players* due to moving house, the committee of the Drama Section of the Thingwall Road, Liverpool, sports club has been re-formed as follows:

Chairman—**Mr T. Saladine**;  
Secretary—**Mrs. V. Roberts**;  
Assistant Secretary—**Mr. R. Rutherford**;  
Treasurer—**Mr. J. Bailey**.

Due to the rising costs of



Just some of the brains and beauty in the Energy Sales Section of the Commercial Department. All ten Energy Sales Demonstrators from each of the MANWEB Districts are pictured at a recent one-day training course at Head Office. They are qualified experts who advise customers on home economics and catering. *Left to right, they are: Beth Owen, Liverpool, Maureen Edwards, Dee Valley, Geraldine Leake, North Wirral, Chris Hughes, Chwyd, Liz Hughes, Gwynedd, Jane Fairclough, Mid-Mersey, Lesley Ratcliffe, North Mersey, Irene Morris, Aberystwyth, Judith McIntyre, Mid-Cheshire and 'E.V.' Jones, Oswestry District.*

hiring Liverpool's Neptune Theatre only one play will be presented at the theatre this season. This will be on February 16th and 17th, and full details will be announced soon.

### Wedding Bells

Our congratulations to Head Office printing machine operator **Hilary O'Niell** and Colin Cowper on the occasion of their wedding at St. Francis Church in Hoole.

Hilary who is 24 has been employed by the Board since she left school eight years ago. Colin is 27 and is a corporal in the R.E.M.E.. His army job has already taken him away from Hilary, at present he is in Germany, and will shortly be going on an exercise to Canada.

The wedding reception was held at Rowton Hall near

### Mr. and Mrs. Cowper.

*Picture by Ray Rowlands*



Chester, and the following day the happy couple left on a touring honeymoon.

Our congratulations too, go to another happy couple on the occasion of their wedding. Head Office audio bank operator **Diane Williams**, married



Mr. and Mrs. Bellis.

*Picture by Mike Hal*

Paul Bellis, a Chester Council joiner, at St Bartholomew's Church, Sealand Road, Chester.

They held their reception at the Chester Curzon Hotel and had days out for the honeymoon.

Two very interested members of MANWEB staff who watched Diane take her marriage vows, were Mum, **Doreen**, who is a clerical assistant in the Head Office Installation and Service Section, and sister **Julie**, who is in the Sealand Road Stores Accounts Section.

### A Helping Hand

An interesting old 16th-Century building — Birchley

Hall, Billinge, near Wigan— was recently opened by **Sue Ryder**, wife of Leonard Cheshire, VC, as a Sue Ryder Home for elderly people. More than 500 people attended a fair which accompanied the opening.

Among the residents at the home who helped with the organisation of the fair was **Mr. Edward Borrows**, aged 84, who painted all the car park and directional signs for the occasion. For many years Mr. Borrows was in charge of the drawing office of our former St. Helens District, having started work before nationalisation with the St. Helens Corporation.

This ancient building, full of interest with secret passages and 'priest holes,' is now a comfortable home in every sense of the word for the elderly people who find rest and care within its walls.

### New E.V.A. Handbook

The Electric Vehicle Association's new handbook is not only a guide to who makes electric vehicles, but also how to look after them and how they can save money for their users.

Great Britain's electric vehicle industry is foremost in the world and the handbook has been written by our experts.

Of the handbook, the Minister of State for Industry, Mr. Alan Williams, said, "It is important that our country's existing lead in this field should be retained; and I am sure that this informative and up-to-date handbook will help to further this aim."

There are articles on road vehicles today, safety and testing, maintenance and industrial trucks and on developments. The four page Buyers' Guide contains the names and addresses of companies whose activities span the complete spectrum of electric vehicle support from design to manufacture and to maintenance.

Copies can be obtained from the Secretary, EVA, 30 Millbank, London SW1P 4RD.

#### Trip to York

Not only was H.M. The Queen at York on August 23rd—the Mid-Mersey Pensioners were there too!

[ ] Blessed again with good weather the pensioners, from St. Helens, Runcorn, Frodsham and

Warrington, travelled by coach first to the YEB at Leeds where they had lunch, and then on to York where they spent the afternoon sightseeing in that lovely city.

Five o'clock saw the party on their way home, calling first at Guiseley for tea.

#### Bowls Match

An invitation bowls match between Liverpool District and Mid-Cheshire District ended in a single point victory for the men and ladies from Merseyside.

The match, organised by Liverpool's Ted Potter and Crewe's Malcolm Cooper, was held at the Thingwall Road Club, in Liverpool. On the day Ted took ill and the host's job was carried out by Denis Underhill.

Despite winning a majority of games, 7 out of the 11 matches, the Crewe team lost on points, 132 for Liverpool and one less for the visitors.

The match was followed by a social evening which put the

seal on a very successful day for the organisers and an enjoyable one for the participants. The Crewe party left with an invitation to repeat the event next year.

#### Red Faces!

Quite definitely the story of the month—it should be a story about Irish shop assistants!

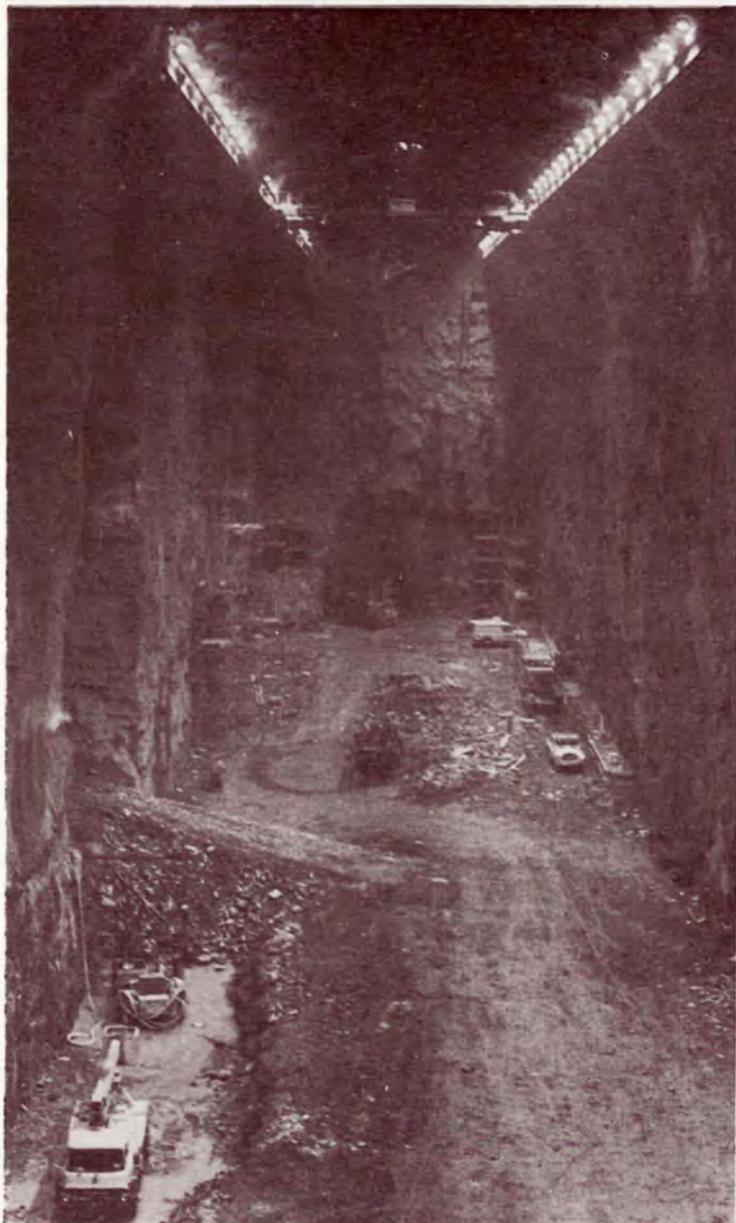
Someone managed to dig up a cable serving the centre of Nantwich cutting off supplies to several premises, including the MANWEB shop.

No-one thought about altering the clock when the supply came back—so it was only the rumbling of hungry tums which made the staff realise that they had worked almost all of their lunch hour. They had 15 minutes before it was time to open the doors again!

The 1978 MANWEB Badminton squad which competed in the 1978 championships for the Electricity Industry. They formed two teams, one of which reached the semi-finals. John Foster is planning the MANWEB Badminton Event in which players of all standards are invited to take part. Basically for fun but the MANWEB squad emerges from the event. Interested! Ring John at North Wirral 241. Details will be in later issues of *Contact*.



# Board Meet at Dinorwic



## **EUROPE'S LARGEST PUMPED-STORAGE SCHEME**

The September meeting of the MANWEB Board was held on site at Dinorwic, Gwynedd, where a workforce of more than 2,000 men are pressing urgently ahead with one of the most exciting and challenging engineering projects in the world.

Before their meeting most of the Board members were taken round the site under the guidance of project manager Mr. Iorwerth Ellis. The engineering and electrical aspects of this massive new pumped-storage generating station were explained by some of Mr. Ellis' technical colleagues before the Board members donned protective clothing and set off to tour a project which is a real eye-opener for any visitor.

First point of call was the scheme's upper reservoir—a natural lake called Marchlyn Mawr, 1,650 feet above sea level on the slopes of Elidir mountain. The lake, now drained, is being enlarged and deepened by the construction of a dam. The visitors then went below ground, seeing the web of access tunnels and excavations deep in the heart of the mountain—mainly lit by MANWEB under contract to the CEGB.

When the Dinorwic scheme is finished in the early 1980s its six turbo-generators will have a maximum output of 1,880 megawatts. It will also be a tremendously versatile plant, capable of producing 1,320 megawatts at ten seconds' notice and of operating for up to five hours with an output of 1,675 megawatts.

"The underground chamber housing the main plant will be one of the largest excavated caverns engineered in the world—twice as long and half as wide as a soccer pitch, and higher than a 16-storey building." These are the words of a CEGB booklet on Dinorwic. Our picture shows the still-unfinished reality, with lorries and vans looking like toys. More than two million tons of slate will have been excavated when Dinorwic is complete.



*Above:* Mr. Ellis, right, points out a feature of interest underground to Board member Lord (Bill) Sefton.

*Above, right:* Welly-washing time after the trip round Dinorwic. Left to right—Messrs. Ellis, Ben Hastings, Lord Sefton, John Parkes, Richard Gales, John Scudamore (Board Secretary) and Tom Jones.



On 30th September an 'Open Day' was held at the site. The extent of public interest can be measured by the fact that no less than 23,000 people flooded the area to walk into the mountain to the main plant hall—with a half-mile return journey at an average gradient of one in ten!

*Right:* Underground again—it must have been a good joke!

*Below:* At Marchlyn Mawr, on the windswept heights of Elidir Fawr.



# CHIEF COMMERCIAL OFFICER MOVES TO CAPENHURST

## Deputy Takes Over As Department Head

Chief Commercial Officer Matt Cowan is to spend two years on secondment to the Electricity Council, based at the Capenhurst Research Centre. His main job will be to market research projects developed at Capenhurst when they reach the stage of potential commercial application.

Mr. Cowan, as Commercial Director, will also seek partners to co-operate with the electricity industry in development and will seek outside finance for the projects. His new responsibilities will also include the supervision of development contracts and the engineering development of the projects during the next two years.

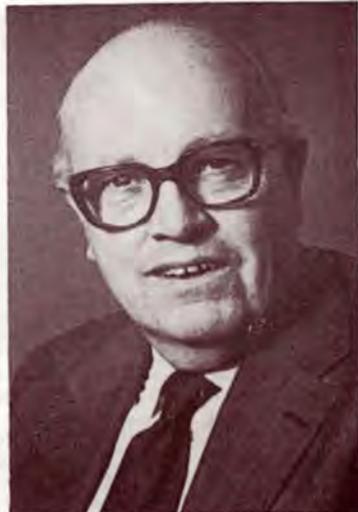
The duties of Chief Commercial Officer at Head Office have been taken over by Bill Shires, our Deputy C.C.O. This move will be followed by other changes of duties within the Department.

In a letter to managerial staff Board Chairman Ben Hastings writes:

*"As early projects at Capenhurst have moved towards the end of their pure research period they have proved difficult to transfer into the market place due to the economic climate. I am delighted*



Mr. Matt Cowan



Mr. Bill Shires

*that, through Mr. Cowan, MANWEB will be making significant contributions in this important and challenging area, and I am sure we will all wish him every success."*

Mr. Derek Holman will carry

out the duties of Deputy Chief Commercial Officer, with effect from the 9th October 1978, and Mr. John Thompson, the Senior Executive Officer, Tariffs and Statistics, will take over Mr. Holman's duties from the same date.

## Obituary

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

**Mr. Alfred Blundell**, formerly a linesman with Liverpool District, who retired from the Board in 1972. He was 70.

**Mr. Daniel O'Leary**, who was 75. Until his retirement in 1968 he was a storekeeper at New Crane Street, Chester.

**Mr. Howell Williams**, of Rhosyllen, who was a retired clerk from the Board's former Area Office. He was 74, and was a valued member of the Dee Valley Retired Staff Association.

**Mr. Geoffrey George Martin**, who retired from his job as chargehand jointer at New Crane Street, Chester in 1976. He was 67.

**Mr. Harold Jenkins**, aged 57, a meter reader/collector in the Dee Valley District based in New Crane Street, Chester.

**Mr. William Yates**, of Prescot Road, St. Helens, an electrician at St. Helens prior to his retirement in 1971. Mr. Yates served the industry for 46 years.

**Mr. Arthur H. Sanders**, of Weaver View, Clifton, Runcorn, a substation attendant at Runcorn who also retired in 1971. He had been employed by the Board for 21 years.

**Mr. John Peter Kelly**, a meter-reader collector with North Wirral District, who died while on holiday. He was chairman of the local branch of the General and Municipal Workers' Union.

**Mr. John Patrick Hewitt**, an installation inspector at Crewe prior to his retirement.

*We extend our sincere sympathy to the families of our former colleagues.*

# MAN OF MAGIC

## Commercial man with a trick or two

**I**N a couple of years time 14 month old Rachele Gregg will be the envy of her playmates, because she will know some magic secrets. When your Dad is a fully fledged Magician and a member of the Magic Circle you are bound to find out how he does some of his tricks.

When he is not conjuring up illusions to baffle his audiences Dad works for MANWEB. He is Senior Engineer Doug Gregg from Head Office Commercial Department in the Energy Sales Section. He has been performing, magic for about 25 years.

It all started at school in his native Hull, where he and his classmates learnt a few tricks to amuse their pals. It developed into an act and with the allied arts, such as puppetry they used to entertain pensioners, hospitals and give charity performances. They had their own Punch and Judy show.

Eventually they formed a junior Magic Circle and Doug attended conventions and took part in competitions. As a teenager at these conventions he met another youngster and they became good friends. His pal turned full-time professional and has since hit the big time on television. He is Paul Daniels—"... you'll like this—not a lot, but..."

Paul made it, so Doug does not have a hankering to do magic full-time for his living.

"No, definitely not," is the firm reply. He says, "it is something I really enjoy doing as a hobby, going full-time in the business would take some of the pleasure out of it. In any case I feel I owe the Electricity Industry something for the education they have given me, and I believe I have something to offer in return for their investment. My job with MANWEB comes first, magic is my fun."

Although Doug has a cabaret act in which his wife Sue is his assistant, he much prefers performing for children.

"They're great, they want to be part of the act. You have to be on your toes, they pick you up on anything. If you say 'I'm going to pull out a black



A happy Doug with kiddies' friend 'Spot' — who lives in a shoe-box!

handkerchief and out comes a white one, boy do they let you know. With adults they just think you've made a mistake and keep quiet".

A short while ago Doug took part in a twelve week course at the new Theatr Clwyd, Mold where he guided the children in handling their own tricks. The course, organised by local drama teachers on Saturday's was designed to teach all aspects of stagecraft.

What about showing us how you do a trick. He said, "Sorry, I can't do that, it is contrary to rules of the profession. I'll show you how to improve your trick, but to show you how a trick is done would spoil the illusion for you and the readers and for any magician who has spent years perfecting a version of that trick"

Doug's magic act has brought him the 'Cock of the North' trophy, and the one of which he is most proud, being third in the International Brotherhood of Magicians contest at Scarborough, where he competed against magicians from several countries.



Chester M.P., Mr. Peter Morrison met management and staff at Head Office on a recent visit. Above, he is pictured with the Chief Officers, from left to right: Messrs. Jim Fisher (Chief Engineer), Ben Hastings (Chairman), Jim Barraclough (Group Manager), Peter Morrison, M.P., Richard Gales (Deputy Chairman), Matt Cowan (Chief Commercial Officer), John Scudamore (Secretary) and Ken Leach (Dep. Ch. Act.)

## **Peter Morrison, M.P. for Chester, visits Head Office**



Touring the building Mr. Morrison met, left, Computer input terminal operator, Jane Marriott, and below, top left, with the Deputy Chairman on the left, Reporting Centre engineer Tony Smith. Top right, Computer Operations Executive Officer Gordon Hughes introduces computer librarian Maureen Donaldson. Below left, with the clerk who prepares his own account, Annette Thomas, and Principal Assistant Hugh Hughes. Bottom right, accounts supervisor, Judy Bailey demonstrates the direct access to the computer records with a visual display unit, watching from the left, are Assistant Chief Accountant Bob Evans, Peter Morrison, Hugh Hughes, David West, Len Walter, and Richard Gales.



# UHF Radios for Liverpool District Meter Readers

## —BEATING THE CASH SNATCHERS

Board employees who collect cash from the thousands of prepayment meters in Liverpool are being equipped with ultra high frequency radios. These new sets will enable our teams of men working together to keep in constant touch with each other and with base.

The new sets—comparable to those used by the police—will enable any collector faced with a potential cash-grabber to alert his colleagues in a matter of seconds, bringing them hot-footed to his aid and probably cutting off the thief's line of escape. The new equipment will also mean that the police can be contacted very quickly in an emergency.

### Passing Obstacles

The men were previously equipped with VHF radios, which could only be used under favourable circumstances. Messages broadcast by the new sets, however, will pass through dense obstacles such as buildings, and will be especially useful to collectors working in teams in large blocks of flats and adjacent streets.

**Brian Nield (right) demonstrates the new equipment to (left to right) Billy Evanson, Billy McGovern, Bernard Jackson, Brian Wignall, Harry Parratt and Peter Falcon.**

Before the new equipment was put to practical use Head Office engineers Fred Brooker and Brian Nield went along to Lister Drive to instruct the collectors in their operation. Consensus of opinion was that the UHF equipment would give the men a better sense of security, and they have proved to be effective in practice.

During recent years there have been a few attacks on our men working in Liverpool, mainly in blocks of flats in the inner-city area. In most of these cases the 'muggers' have snatched the cash and run for it, and no-one has been seriously hurt.

Peter Falcon, our Liverpool District Administrative Officer, commented: "The fact that our men have this new equipment means that a cash-snatcher would have much less chance of getting away with it and much more chance of landing up in the cells."

A few days after the sets were received Peter went 'on the air' with Radio Merseyside, explaining the reasons for their introduction to the station's listeners.



# Vigilance Can Save Lives—

## *Publicity after series of incidents*

Following a series of accidents involving contact with overhead power lines in recent weeks, MANWEB has made an urgent appeal to farmers, building site workers, yachtsmen, and managers of industrial premises and holiday centres such as camping sites and caravan parks.

The Boards' message, which can save lives and prevent serious injuries, is simply. "Keep well clear of overhead electricity lines!"

During the past few weeks:

- \* A farm worker was killed near Aberdaron when he came into contact with a line while standing on a load of hay.
- \* A youth was seriously injured near Rhuddlan when he fell from a barn roof after touching a line.
- \* A man working on a barn at Whitchurch was badly hurt when he touched a line with a roofing sheet.

\* A worker at a transport depot at Park Hill, near Oswestry, had the narrowest of escapes when placing an aluminium ladder against a lorry.

\* A youth was injured at a site near Sandbach when a mobile crane touched a line.

Particular sources of potential danger are agricultural and building machinery, ladders, metal tent poles, and the masts of sailing boats. The holiday season was still with us, and a lot of harvesting work went on in some areas when this appeal was made. Outdoor workers and holidaymakers were urged to take great care in the vicinity of overhead lines.

Commented Board Safety Officer Vic Heard: "We are very concerned indeed over the number of accidents which have happened this year. We urge everyone at risk to be extremely vigilant."

Two of the Electricity Council posters urging vigilance near overhead lines.

