

FIRST CITIZENS
(see page 190)



*Councillor Arthur Parr
Mayor of Halton District Council*



*Mrs. Ethell Parr
Mayoress of Halton District Council*

Contact

September 1978



BEFORE *Depression*

Kitchen planning service to the rescue

AFTER *Elation*



Our pictures on this page show the same lady, in the same kitchen, but in two totally different moods. Even though Mrs. Margaret Bardsley's original kitchen was all-electric, it was unplanned and she often felt depressed and 'hemmed in'.

Then she heard about the MANWEB Kitchen Planning Service and she began to brighten up. Following a visit from Dilys Davies, our Gwynedd District marketing representative who later liaised with Ivor Maddocks (*sales supervisor, Kitchen Planning*) at Head Office, our customer began to look forward eagerly to her new kitchen.

On schedule, various tradesmen went along to Mrs. Bardsley's home at Windy Corner, Bethel near Caernarfon, and soon the kitchen was transformed into a spacious, gleaming and colourful dream.

Our Commercial colleagues are still gathering in orders for our planned kitchen scheme and our shops are happily picking up yet more business in the 'do-it-yourself' market for the self-assembly kitchen units recently announced in 'Contact'.

Contact

THE STAFF MAGAZINE
OF THE
MERSEYSIDE AND
NORTH WALES
ELECTRICITY BOARD

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On other
pages . . .

Festiniog Railway	184
Aid for Sudan	187
Talking Notes	190
Junior Seminar	192
Wallworks' Wanderings	194
Work Opportunities	195
Retirements	196
'Economy Seven'	198
Letters	199
Obituary	200

A SHARPER EDGE

AS SUMMER—such as it was!—turns to Autumn, most householders give at least a passing thought to the question of keeping warm through the cold and damp of the coming winter.

Developments over the past few years have underlined the painful fact that there is no longer any really cheap fuel. In deciding how to heat his home the average customer probably regards himself as confronted with a choice of expensive evils, and the question of home insulation receives well-merited attention from an increasing number of people.

Each Autumn the fuel industries launch their publicity campaigns, aimed at convincing the customer that their products offer the best prospect. Independent opinion, however, advises him not to commit himself to high capital cost by switching to alternative central heating fuels.

The introduction of the new *Economy Seven* prices for electricity taken at night brings a brighter shine to electricity's appeal this Winter, offering us the best opportunity of recent years to consolidate and expand our place in the home heating field. The new low price, combined with the traditional advantages of cleanliness, convenience, and low installation costs, should prove attractive to anyone giving serious thought to higher standards of home comfort.

A constant and substantial off-peak electricity load is in the national interest, helping to make the most economic and effective use of our generating plant. *Economy Seven* brings an opportunity which may not be repeated.

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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.

Steaming Back to Blaenau Ffestiniog

PUFFING and grunting up the continuous gradient the little steam engines of the Festiniog Railway toil their way the 12 miles from Porthmadog to Tan-y-Grisiau, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles short of their original destination, Blaenau Ffestiniog.

Their payload now is 300 or so passengers—tourists and railway enthusiasts—whose fares cover the operation costs of the Company. The original freight was slate from the Blaenau quarries, destined for export around the world via the once busy Welsh port.

The arrival of the national railroads at Blaenau in the 1880's robbed the narrow 2ft gauge railway of some of its business, and the decline in the demand for Blaenau slate almost spelled the demise of the company. It did stop operating in 1946, but thanks to a band of dedicated enthusiasts the Festiniog Railway Society was formed and a trust founded, which took over the railway company.

The society called for volunteers to join and work to rebuild the railroad back to Blaenau from the coast. Two such volunteers are men from MANWEB both 1st Engineers in the Technical Section of the Head Office Engineering Department. Tim Oulton and Jim Parrish are involved with the Boards telecommunications, Tim on planning and Jim on commissioning and maintenance.

Both are bachelors and spend their weekends, and some of their holidays working for the railway. Tim is 43 and joined the society in 1956, shortly after trains had started to run across the causeway out of Porthmadog station, carrying passengers the mile or so there and back.

After two years of clearing undergrowth from the old route, draining, and preparing the permanent way for relaying the track, Tim placed his expertise in telecommunications at the disposal of the company. He has since helped design and construct the railway's communications network. Small scale experiments on the railroad have also enabled him to try out his ideas before incorporating them in the MANWEB system.

Jim Parrish is 31, and has worked on the Festiniog Railway since 1965. Physical labour has been Jim's interest in the enterprise, extending and maintaining the permanent way and constructing new stations. He has been the organiser for the Dee and Mersey Group of volunteers for the passed four years, with Tim as chairman.

From their group they also provide staff for the railway's stand at various exhibitions, and organise



Above, 'the train now leaving Porthmadog is bound for Tan-y-Grisiau, stopping at . . .' and *below the busy platform scene as tourists and enthusiasts board the 3 o'clock from Porthmadog.*



fund raising activities to aid the railway's finances.

As the volunteers laid more track and opened more stations so the passenger traffic increased and the Welsh Tourist Board provided some much needed cash to finance the extension of the permanent way further into the wild Moelwyn Mountains, with the track clinging precariously to steep hillsides and disappearing through narrow rocky cuttings.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Men from MANWEB have interests in three different railway societies all wanting voluntary help, from men or women in all departments. Anyone interested should contact the following:

Jim Parrish, tel. Head Office 2154, for the 2ft. gauge Festiniog Railway.

Chris Tigwell, Lister Drive 766, who is a Director of the Welshpool-Llanfair 2ft. 6 inches gauge railway.

Mike Ellis, Head Office 2174, who works on the standard gauge 'real trains' of the Llangollen Railway.

Dduallt Station was reached and from this point, two major engineering problems faced the volunteers. The C.E.G.B. had built a power station and the waters of Llyn Ystradau, a reservoir for the power station, had engulfed the route of the old line, and the tunnel leading to that section had been plugged.

A new tunnel had to be built and the route of the permanent way had to follow a higher level, which left the planners with two alternatives of raising the track to the new level. One was to increase the otherwise fairly uniform gradient, the other to deviate the line, extending the route of the permanent



Above, Tim Oulton climbs a pole and right adjusts a PAX selector, while below left, Jim Parrish drives work engine 'Sludge' and below right, packs new track.





Left, Jim Parrish, tightens one of the last nuts on a section of track near Tan-y-Grisiau Station, in preparation for the first steam train. Is it coming or going? Our picture above, shows the Double Fairlie engine the 'Merddian Emrys' one of two specially built for the Festiniog Railway and a unique feature of the railroad. There are six passenger pulling engines in operation on the railway and five more in various stages of restoration.

way but keeping a fairly constant rate of climb for the little engines.

Deviation was chosen, and this led to a unique and remarkable piece of railway engineering, known as the Dduallt Loop. An embankment using the spoil from the tunnel raised the track in a wide loop, eventually coming back to bridge over its lower section, having gained the extra height needed to maintain the uniform gradient.

Three professionals were employed by the company to bore the tunnel, and aided by the volunteers and the company's permanent staff it took a year to blast and cut through the 294 yards of rock, and line inside with concrete. Compensation from the C.E.G.B. helped meet the cost of the tunnel. Labour from a job creation scheme by the Manpower Services Commission helped ease the slog of the volunteers and speed the work on the Deviation.

In July 1978 steam returned to Tan-y-Grisiau, the new temporary terminus for the line, after 32 years.

With only 1½ miles to go, and another two years work, to the original destination, Blaenau Ffestiniog, where there are plans for a Festiniog Railway/British Rail Station, opening up the tourist trade for the town and bringing more passengers to the little trains.

From a defunct and dilapidated industrial ruin, the Festiniog Railway Society have created a viable commercial enterprise operating at a small profit and employing a permanent staff of over 60, as well as preserving a piece of railway history.

The station shops and cafes, the licensed buffet cars and the Company owned travel agency all help provide funds for future developments, but volunteers are still needed, both male or female, to work on the track, maintain the rolling stock, serve in the shop or on the trains, or even to become fireman and eventually engine drivers.

If you should be interested in working on this particular railroad, give Jim Parrish or Tim Oulton a ring, and they will show you where you could fit in.

Leaving Porthmadog the train and 300 passengers chug across the 'Cob' to start another continuous climb through the variety of scenery of the Moelwyn Mountains.



A MANWEB engineer has recently completed a ten-week secondment to Fletcher and Stewart Ltd. of Derby who are constructing and commissioning a sugar refinery at Asalaya in the Sudan. Fletcher and Stewart, (Queens Award for Export Achievement, 1977), are a well-established British firm who design and manufacture equipment for processing sugar, but have only recently taken the big step of engineering a whole refinery themselves.

The aspects of the project they are not familiar with such as the civil works, etc., have been sub-contracted out. British Engineering International, a consultancy tapping the services of the electricity supply industry were asked to provide the relevant h.v. commissioning expertise. MANWEB were approached, and Terry Gopsill, a 2nd engineer in the Head Office technical department, was asked to go out to Sudan.

The plant which is being developed is a self-contained complex with a total energy concept where waste products from the sugar cane—bagass—are

fed into the boilers to produce steam for both process and electrical generation purposes.

There are two turbo-alternator sets each of 8.35 MW capacity and a 0.75 MW diesel standby set, all generating at 3.3-kV. These feed into a fifteen panel switchboard from which there are radial feeds to six 1.5 MVA transformers at 3.3/433-kV and feeds to two 3.3-kV motor starter panels. For starting up the factory there is an 11-kV incoming grid supply from the Sudan Light Company. This is connected to the main factory 3.3-kV switchboard via a 1 MVA linking transformer.

The task requested of MANWEB was to commission this plant together with all the control, protection and metering equipment. After a short briefing of the project in Derby, Terry left behind the comforts of home, his wife Teresa and two young daughters, Claire aged five and Gillian aged 10 months, flying to Khartoum from Heathrow, and here he recalls his 10 weeks in Sudan.

In the Land of the Honey Bee

—MANWEB AID FOR SUDAN

AFTER a seven hour flight including a fueling stop in Cairo, I arrived at the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, at 8 p.m. Leaving the air-conditioned environment of the aircraft I experienced for the first time the hot evening air of a tropical country. There was a distinct smell of woodsmoke from cooking fires, and although the sun had dropped below the horizon the evening was illuminated by the largest full moon I'd ever seen.

Passing through customs and security checks took

quite some time. This was my first encounter with the pace of life of the Sudanese people—slow and methodical. Outside the airport in the main square, white-robed and be-turbanned taxi drivers vied for business. Beggars with a range of disabilities pleaded for alms, I had been told to give the standard reply of "Allah Kareen," (*Allah will provide*).

I was met at the airport by Idriss, a Sudanese travel courier, who drove me to my hotel and helped me through those first few frightening hours in a completely alien country. Lunch the following day was taken in the Khartoum Hilton. By this time I had been joined by another engineer from Fletcher and Stewart returning to site after leave.

He was able to describe various aspects of the project whilst we ate a delightful meal of local salads, and meats. Prices were reasonable except for the beer—£1.50 a can!

(continued on page 188)

A typical village in Asalaya, Sudan, with the conical shaped huts surrounded by a high fence.





An aerial view of the Asalaya total energy concept sugar refinery.

The following day I flew to the site, 150 miles further south, in the company plane, a ten-seater Islander. From the air we saw the Sudan for what it was, a vast, flat, brown parched land as far as the eye could see. There were immense areas symmetrically divided to facilitate irrigation by canals. During the growing season there would be many hundreds of square miles of green sugar cane justifying these sugar refineries built in the middle of the wilderness.

After almost an hour's bumpy flight at 600 feet we could see the partially-complete complex, with a number of tiny villages dotting the landscape with perfectly straight tracks joining one to another. This was it, Asalaya—'land of the honey bee'—home for another ten weeks.

The expatriate community of engineers and advisers were housed in a small village of brick built bungalows about one mile from the refinery. Each bungalow, housing three engineers or a family, consisted of three bedrooms, two toilet/shower rooms, two tea-rooms, and a large veranda enclosed with insect netting.

Our houseboy, Abdulamar, lived in an outhouse at the bottom of the garden. He looked after security and attended all the house-keeping chores. Meals were taken in the mess, the focal point of the village, which was on the style of a military officers'

mess, (flag-pole included). There we had, as well as dining-rooms, games-rooms, reading-rooms, TV room, (using video-tapes), and a well-stocked bar.

Existence there was made even more enjoyable by the swimming-pool, which continually had a posse of Sudanese on duty cleaning it out and tending to the small filtration plant.

The hours were long on site, and work started at 6 a.m. and finished at 5.30 p.m. with two one-hour breaks for breakfast and lunch. We had one day off one week, a half-day off the next. This didn't leave a lot of time for social-life, most people retiring before 9.30 p.m. The weekly break was always a Friday, (the Moslem equivalent of Sunday), thus making Thursday evening the main social night. There was always something organised—either a sports competition, snooker, darts, etc., or a barbecue by the pool, with an outdoor bar.

The nearest major conurbation was Kosti, fifty miles away, the former Sudanese Capital, where the famous Kosti Bridge, built by the colonial British, crossed the Nile forming the major road and rail link from East to West Sudan. We were surprised to find only one carriageway in use, and that was only because a sufficient number of planks had been tied together to span the gaping holes in the bridge's structure. It was quite a relief to have crossed it successfully.

A visit to Dinder National Park and Wild Life Reserve provided us with more exciting moments. Dinder is in the Southern Province of Sudan on the border with Ethiopia. Six of us flew from site early one Friday morning to Dinder, where we boarded an open landrover with a Sudanese driver and armed escort to find the wild life of Africa.

That day was to prove to be one of the hottest I experienced—110°F. We saw a large variety of animals including wild boar, giraffe, deer, gazelle, baboons, monkeys and lions. As we passed through a dark thicket of tall trees we were pelted with nuts and branches, the local baboon community objecting to our presence. They screeched and danced and were almost as relieved as we were when we finally moved out onto the open plain.

Our next anxious moment came just after we had located a pride of lions lying in the shade beneath a clump of trees.

We stopped the landrover, took a few photographs and had a drink. Unfortunately, the landrover wasn't quite ready to leave at the same time as us. The engine turned lifelessly time and time again. We all had visions of staying the night and being entertained as dinner by the locals. Fortunately one of the party was a mechanical engineer, and after a half-hours work unblocking a fuel-pipe we were on our way back to base.

The commissioning work progressed steadily, although we had to overcome many design errors in the scheme. I had as my assistants an electrical engineer from Fletcher and Stewart, a Sudanese trainee electrical engineer, also acting as an interpreter, and two young Sudanese labourers. Most of

the electrical fitting and installation work was done by imported Indian labour. The Sudanese providing only a small proportion of skilled and semi-skilled workers but all of the vast labouring force. The commissioning programme I planned was to rapidly come to a close during my last week there, culminating in a commissioning party given by the senior electrical engineer. (We were the only department on schedule).

During the last week I was expecting just to tie up loose ends, calculate the relay-settings required and put the finishing touches to my sun-tan. The events of my last week on site proved it to be the most hectic week of all.

The sub-contractors electrical engineer had a severe bout of dysentery, the senior site electrical engineer had a stroke, and the Sudanese labour force went on strike. Finally there were two separate accidents to Indian mechanical erectors within the space of half-an-hour. The first was taken to the medic by one of my assistants, the other was loaded into my landrover but unfortunately died shortly after reaching the medic.

I left site for Khartoum only hours after putting the protection settings on the relays and tying up some loose ends in the paperwork. I left behind many friends and happy memories.

One final treat planned before my arrival in the UK was a two-day tour of Cairo. There I saw the pyramids, Mohamad Ali Mosque and many other attractions. I stayed at the El-Borz Hotel on the banks of the Nile, a pleasant and fitting climax to a memorable experience.

Some of the electrical equipment and switchgear which needed MANWEB expertise to see protection equipment was correctly installed before commissioning by our man on the spot Terry Gopsill, pictured second from the right in the left hand picture.



Talking Notes

MR. & MRS.—ACTIVE IN RETIREMENT

ONE of the big problems of retirement is what to do with your time when you no longer have to go to work. In preparing for retirement, many people take up new hobbies and pastimes while others find that their 'outside' interests are taking up more and more of their free time.

This is no doubt true for **Arthur and Ethel Parr**, a husband and wife team and former members of our Mid-Mersey District staff. They are now fully active in retirement as The Mayor and Mayoress of Halton District Council, and their engagement diary is filling day by day.

After serving for twelve months as the Deputy Mayor and Mayoress, Arthur and Ethel were elected as First Citizens in May of this year. Since then they have been kept busy with official engagements including a visit to a Buckingham Palace garden party. However, they are finding real enjoyment in their calls on local schools and hospitals.

As a memento of their visit to the Victoria Road Primary School, the Mayor and Mayoress received a huge book made up of letters, poems and drawings from the children.

One particular letter which intrigued Arthur was from a young boy who wrote saying what he would do if he were the Mayor of Halton. After building a swimming baths near his home, he would donate £1,000 to the Manchester United football club. Arthur told us, "I sent a copy of the letter to Les Olive the Manchester United

COVER PICTURE

The first Citizens of Halton, Arthur and Ethel Parr, the Mayor and Mayoress of the District Council, both former MANWEB employees now retired.



Mr. and Mrs. Parr

secretary who has replied with an offer to entertain the young man at the ground where he will get the opportunity to meet the players."

During his year of office, Arthur is endeavouring to get schoolchildren interested in aspects of civic life. Many groups of young people will be visiting the Town Hall where they will be able to ask questions of local Councillors and civic officials. One point already being

brought home to the young visitors is how vandalism costs their parents hard cash through the rates they pay.

Another proposal is for a few youngsters to be selected from each of Halton's 50-or-so junior schools and to invite them as V.I.P.s to a luncheon and reception at the Town Hall. The children will, of course, come from both sides of the river in Widnes and in Runcorn.

Arthur commented "I believe that this integration of the young people from the two towns will bear fruits in the years to come with the new Halton District being accepted more than it is today."

Another of the Mayor's projects during his year in office is to try and visit as many churches of various denominations and attend one of their services. "Here again," he said, "this is yet another field where a certain amount of integration, tolerance and understanding would be of great value."

Arthur was a meter reader/collector based at Runcorn depot prior to his retirement in 1977 after nearly 40 years' service. He began his working life with the former Mersey Power Company and during the last war served with the RAMC in the Middle East ending up on a hospital ship ferrying repatriated Russian prisoners-of-war back to their homeland.

He is widely travelled having visited most European countries and various parts of Africa.

Prior to serving as a Liberal

member on Halton District Council for the past five years, Arthur was a member of the former Runcorn Urban District Council.

His partner Ethel retired in September 1975 when working as a senior clerical assistant at District Office in Warrington. She joined the industry in 1932 and worked successively as a machine operator, copy typist and clerk for the former Mersey Power Company. She left in 1944 to start a family. Nine years later she returned to work for the Board at Eversley, Runcorn and finally Warrington.

A lady of many talents, as proved by the various jobs she has held, Ethel too refused to stagnate in retirement. She is now in her fourth year with the Open University which she began with a course on Social Science, spending some time at Keele University. Other subjects then followed and this year she is studying "Man's Religious Quest"—and is now quite an authority on many of the world's living religions.

Yes, Arthur and Ethel Parr project an excellent example of how to keep active in mind and body—even in retirement!

BIG DEAL WINNER!

Proud possessor of a Viner Studio set of stainless steel cutlery in a magnificent presentation case is **Doris Evelyn Hall**, a sales assistant at our Rhyl shop.

"This is the first prize I have ever won," she said. "I now hope that this is the start of my lucky year!"

The cutlery was one of the prizes on the Hoover "Big Deal" national competition in which staff at electrical retailers selling specific Hoover items had their names entered in the "Big Deal Draw".

Rather than having one major prize like a car or a trip to the

Malcolm Bulman, Hoover Area Manager, congratulates 'Big Deal' winner Doris Evelyn Hall, watched by District Sales Supervisor Bob Hewitt.



Bahamas, the Company decided to give lots of smaller, but still valuable prizes.

Our winner Doris has been with MANWEB for the past 17 years, first on a part-time basis and later full-time at our Rhyl shop. She and her husband Kenneth—an area sales manager—are keen photographers.

(It may be your lucky year Doris so why not use your camera and enter the for 'Contact' photographic competition? A copy of the rules is on the way to you!—Editor)

BEST ROUND

The first golfer to have his name inscribed on the base of the new "John Greenhalgh Memorial Trophy" is **Denis Atkinson** of our Clwyd District.

"I didn't think I would win the competition," he commented "as I was very disappointed with my own game on the day. I was surprised when told that I had come in with the best score."

With the trophy went a bottle of champagne, a bottle of whisky and a hip flask.

Denis took up golf five years ago when he joined the Rhuddlan golf club. Since then he has made steady progress and last year won the President's Prize and has won the odd Medal competition. On another occasion he was successful in one of the monthly competitions organised by the MANWEB Golf-

ing Society. He plays off a handicap of 18.

He is also keen on river fishing but in this sport he never competes. "Solely for pleasure!" he says. In the Winter months he plays a little badminton.

Denis has been with the Board since 1950 when he worked in the Stores Accounts section at Rhosyllen. Later he moved over to Clwyd District as Material Controller.

His wife **Vera** also works for us at Cefndy Road offices where she is a clerk in Commercial Work Control section. They have a son and a married daughter who has provided them with a grandson.

Mr. and Mrs. Atkinson





A group of MANWEB staff touring the Fiddlers Ferry Power Station.

Mid-Mersey Junior Seminar

AT Warrington recently, the 19 young people who have joined our Mid-Mersey District staff over the past few months—the forerunners of the special 'Youth Policy' adopted by District Administrative Officer Mr. Denis Hodgetts—took part in a one-day seminar designed to give them an insight into the workings of the electricity supply industry and their own futures.

Mr. Dennis Kernan (*Education & Training Officer*) spoke of the opportunities available for further education and professional training. He explained the new Business Education Council's examinations which would replace the present technical and professional qualifications.



He went on to outline MANWEB's educational incentives scheme, study prize awards day release procedure and financial assistance which is made available to students, concluding with a word about the famous Outward Bound Courses.

Then Mr. Hodgetts explained how young members of the staff could become professionally qualified as accountants and secretaries.

Bringing the morning session to a close, Mr. Bill Clarey, one of Mid-Mersey's system engineers, gave a brief talk before conducting the party to look round the District's reporting centre and John Sherwen, principal assistant, General Services, explained the working of the Board's Joint Consultation machinery.

Then came a pleasant trip to Fiddler's Ferry power station for lunch followed by a two-hour tour of the station to complete a most interesting and informative 'teach-in'.

Judging by the number of leading questions put by the young delegates, the experiment was most rewarding and successful.

Pictured left, Mr. Denis Kernan the new Education and Training Officer, jokes with delegates Elaine Proffitt, standing, and Pat Bandy, on the left, with Glyn Jones and Karen Leatherbarrow. Below, in C.E.G.B. safety helmets are left to right: Karen Paulley, David Garner and Carol Clarke.





Education and Training Officer Appointed

Mr. Denis Kernan is the new Education and Training Officer. He is 56 and has been employed as a supervisory training instructor, administrator, and corporate development officer since joining MANWEB



Denis Kernan



in 1971, after retiring from the Royal Navy.

His naval career started two months before the outbreak of war in 1939. He qualified as a marine engineering officer from the Navy's Greenwich College, and served on a variety of naval craft during the hostilities.

After the war he held posts afloat and in technical training establishments, the submarine service and in management services, retiring as a Lieut.-Commander in 1971.

Denis Kernan and his wife, Joyce, have two children, a son and daughter, who are twins and themselves both married.



Top: Mr. Denis Hodgetts with, from the left, David Clifton, Sandra Jones, Lorraine East, and Denise Booth.

Centre: In the middle of the picture, Mr. John Sherwen chats to, from the left, Karen Chadwin, Christine Burgess, Alison McGee and Mike Heath.

Below: Mr. Bill Clarey, front, with left to right: Bernard Leid Carol Bowyer, Jane Hough and Mark Bradley.

Asian Epilogue

Our last report from the Wandering of Wallworks left them returning across the Thai/Malaysian frontier through Malaysia and back down to Singapore. Bill Wallwork reflects on his journey through Asia.

DURING the drive on the last leg of the Asian part of our journey, I commented that despite everything we would miss Asia. These words were more prophetic than either of us realised at the time. To a European making a first contact with Asia almost every aspect of life is different.

Noise and noises—it is impossible to convey, in writing, the cacophony which assaults the ears all day—noisy vehicles, mopeds, shouting, continuous blasts from vehicles hooters, loudspeaker vans patrolling the streets advertising the current film, loudspeakers along the street always at full blast and always distorted, vivid colours; dense throngs of people. It is quite normal to have to force a passage down the street of a town or a village, finger permanently on hooter at a maximum speed of ten miles an hour. Different modes of dress, filth, squalor and smells cheek by jowl with beautiful buildings, the strange compound of traffic on the streets—humans, cows, sheep, goats and dogs wandering at large and all untouchable. Cycles by the hundred, rickshaws, carts pulled by a variety of animals with drivers ranging in age from ten to a hundred but all completely oblivious of surrounding traffic. The ever present sound of hawking and spitting which haunts one even after leaving Asia, the plumbing, electrics and joinery which rarely work, the absence of litter such as bottles, cans, paper and cardboard due to the efficient scavenging system on the part of humans and animals; the insatiable curiosity of everyone,—especially towards foreigners and the ensuing lack of privacy—to paraphrase a cigarette advertisement “You can never be alone in Asia.”

The begging which comes as a shock after years of not seeing any, a shock accentuated when the fact penetrates that many of the beggars live on a few square feet of pavement without shelter of any kind; the trades carried on on the pavement; beautiful

landscapes and buildings which cannot be described in terms of superlatives; the unfailing patience and good humour of people no matter how trying the circumstances coupled with the utmost lack of what in the West are called good manners; a centuries-old, placid way of life, regulated by the sun and seasons in which the clock and the motor car play little or no part, and where work is done the hard way and most goods carried on the head.

One really does see the ploughman wending his way home, driving his oxen in front of him and carrying his plough on his shoulder. A cause for reflection and perhaps some heart-searching is the way in which religion and religious observations are a natural, normal, accepted part of everyday life. The most depressing of all sights is that of the hundreds of thousands of men of all ages, singly or in groups standing, sitting or lying in the streets of every town and village or wandering aimlessly along the roads engaged in the endless task of killing time, and for whom the appearance of a foreign vehicle is as manna from heaven, a cause of intense excitement. And so one could go on, but this list is an indication of the feelings of attraction, distaste, wonder, repulsion, compassion and fascination engendered in the first-time traveller in Asia.

In Answer to Yours . . .

In several letters we have been asked about our reactions to the day to day mechanics of continuous travel in a hot climate, so here are a few notes.

Driving—In 12 months we travelled 20,000 miles in Asia, and at least half of this time was in the tropics. Daily distances ranged from 50 miles to 300 miles. In general we tried to alternate driving and sightseeing, and took a few days break whenever the opportunity offered. There were occasional periods when we drove all day for days on end—in the desert for example—and this tended to be hard work, but there was no sensible alternative.

Health—We were truly thankful that we got through Asia without any major health upset. We were well advised and well equipped before we left, and carried an invaluable little booklet entitled “Health Guide for Travellers”. It was an inviolable rule to drink only water from our purifier, otherwise bottled and branded soft drinks such as Coca Cola. We ate only in the restaurants listed on the guide books or recommended locally. Buying fresh food was more of a problem on account of the lack of hygiene in the shops. All purchases were double-washed in water containing dissolved purifying tablets.

These precautions may seem a little fussy, but in view of the number of people we met, particularly young ones on slim budgets, who had suffered or were suffering from diarrhoea, dysentery or hepatitis

Creating Work Opportunities

Merseyside and parts of North Wales are harder hit by the problems of industrial recession and unemployment than most areas of the country. In particular the only prospect for thousands of school leavers is the dole queue, and any measures which help to ease this depressing situation are welcome.

The problem was discussed by a recent meeting of the District Joint Advisory Council, when the Board's policy and the measures we are taking to offer work and training opportunities to both adult and young people were explained.

Chairman Ben Hastings told *Contact* that the Board were stepping up their training programmes, but added that in a period of high unemployment there was a temptation to relax efforts to improve efficiency and productivity by various methods, including computerisation.

Safeguarding Jobs

The Board firmly believed, however, that these continued efforts were necessary to safeguard the long-term employment prospects of its employees. It was therefore Board policy to continue to search for improved efficiency of operation, but at the same time to try to ease the short-term effects of this policy by additional training and by other measures which would create extra employment opportunities.

These measures will include:

- ★ Efforts to expand business in the commercial contracting field, thus creating additional job opportunities.
- ★ Creation of new jobs which are viable, such as formation of teams to combat the theft of electricity.
- ★ An increase in the number of craft apprentices in training to 52 (compared with 40 last year).
- ★ Employment of supernumerary junior clerks, who would be absorbed into vacant posts as they arose.
- ★ In co-operation with the Manpower Services Commission to provide six-months work experience in industrial activities for up to 25 young people under the Work Experience Programme.

Additionally the Board has 71 student engineers at various stages of training under a variety of further education schemes.

MANWEB, as a major employer of young people, has always placed great importance on its education and training programmes for young employees. Close contacts are maintained with the careers advisory services of local education authorities, while the Board operates extensive arrangements for the further education of various categories of younger staff.

Wallworks' Wanderings (continued)—

we did not think so. We were surprised how well we withstood the heat. It was mostly dry heat and this helped. We wore the minimum of clothing and sloshed buckets of cold water over ourselves—this is the Asian shower—at any and every opportunity but never went near lakes or streams.

Our final act was to report to the dockside for loading *Vandewal*, our caravan, early in the morning, and we thought it would be sensible to get there the evening before to avoid Singapore's morning rush traffic. Sensible—maybe. Complicated—certainly.

On arrival at the dock gate in the evening I asked the customs if they would clear us. They said they would if the policeman alongside would let us in the dock. After a succession of more senior officers the Duty Officer subjected me to a through interrogation. Presumably satisfied, he said he would have to ring the Duty Officer of the "Godown" where our ship was lying. During the conversation, emphasising our harmlessness, he referred to us as an elderly

English couple, which so shook me that I was not quite myself for the rest of the evening.

When we drove alongside the ship the following morning we were immediately asked for the weight of the caravan and told them 2½ tons. A few minutes afterwards a ship's officer came to me and said "There is no shore crane here so your caravan must be lifted by the ship's crane. It is rated at 2½ tons, and when it was new 25 years ago the maximum safe loading was 3 tons. What it is to-day we don't know. What do you want us to do? The decision is yours, the risk is yours".

What on earth does one say or can one say in such circumstances? We gave the only possible answer and once again stood with breath held, fingers and toes crossed to cracking point whilst *Vandewal* was lifted on to the foredeck.

And so the Wallworks' board the vessel Koto Singapura, bound for Freemantle in Australia and the half-way mark in their round-the-world trip.



A farewell handshake for Geoff Hope from 1st Engineer Ken Rigby, with beard, watched by some of his friends and colleagues.

RETIREMENTS

Mr. GEOFF HOPE

After 47 years' service to the industry, Mr. Geoff Hope, chargehand at Liverpool District, retired recently.

Mr. Hope began as an apprentice wireman in 1931, being transferred to the Ministry of Defence as an electrician during the war, and returning to our former Liverpool South District in 1946. He later became a meter fixer inspector in the Central District, and a chargehand on the merging of the Central and South Districts.

On behalf of the many friends made during a lifetime in the industry he was presented with a variety of gifts including a carriage clock, mirror, and a pullover. Among his leisure pursuits is that of treasurer to the Allerton District Scout Troop.

Mrs. MAY DEVINE

Mrs. May Devine, a clerk in the outside control section at Liverpool District, retired recently after ten years with the Board. Before moving to Lister Drive she worked at our accounts office in Derby House, Liverpool.

On behalf of her friends she was presented with a variety of gifts, and their best wishes for a long and happy retirement.

Mr. DANIEL OWEN

After 21 years' service with the Board Mr. Daniel Owen, a linesman's mate at Gwynedd District, received a clock as a parting gift from his colleagues. The presentation was made by Mr. A. R. Shaw (*District Engineer*).

Mr. Owen was for some time closely involved with the North Wales rural development programme, and latterly worked in Anglesey.

Friends and colleagues gather round Mrs. May Devine, with the bouquet, for a farewell picture, in front are the many cards and gifts to mark her retirement.



Mr. Kidd (centre right) receives his farewell presentation from Mr. Peter Henderson, formerly Secretary to the Board, who himself retired a few months ago.



MR. A. KIDD

The Assistant Secretary (Personnel) Mr. Albert Kidd, retired from the Board after 42 years service in the Electricity Industry.

It was in 1936 that a young Alan Kidd, as he was better known, joined the local authority Electricity Department in East London as a cashier/service centre assistant. Four years later, after the outbreak of war he joined the R.A.F. where he became a pilot and flew a variety of aircraft, including fighters, on operational duties, terminating his flying career by being seconded to B.A.O.C. for 12 months after the cessation of hostilities.

He returned as a civilian to the electricity industry and with nationalisation was employed in a variety of posts with the Eastern Electricity Board before joining MANWEB in 1953 as secretary of the former No 4 Sub-Area at Rhostyllen. He held that post until 1970 when he came to Head Office as Assistant Secretary (Personnel).

As one would expect from a veteran pilot of World War II he has a keen interest in fighting aircraft of that era. He is also a keen cine photographer and proficient at adding sound and commentary to his films. Golf, too is one of his passions, with gardening another keen interest.

Cheshire Builders switch to Electricity

The Directors of a Cheshire building firm have been so impressed by the electricity industry's *Medallion Award Scheme for Energy Saving Homes* that they are switching from oil to electricity for heating new houses being built at Bunbury, Cheshire.

The new homes, by Messrs Andford Contractors Ltd., of Duddon Common, near Tarporley, will qualify for the industry's energy-saving *Medallion Award* with high-efficiency roof insulation, wall insulation, double-glazing and comprehensive draught-proofing. Heating and water-heating will be supplied mainly by low-cost electricity taken at night, and the high insulation standards will be paid for by money saved on chimneys, fuel stores, and heating pipework. The new houses will be the first in Cheshire to win the Medallion Award.

Commented director Mr. Mike Andrews, "Many people spend a lot of money insulating their houses. The people who buy these Medallion Homes will have the highest insulation standards built into them from the outset. We had originally intended to fit oil central heating into these houses, but we have come

to the conclusion that the electricity Medallion scheme will be more attractive to prospective purchasers because of its comfort, cleanliness, convenience and running costs."

The first phase of the development will include eight three-bedroomed houses with *Electricaire* heating and three two-bedroomed houses with electric ceiling heating. The electrical side of things will be in the hands of MANWEB's Mid-Cheshire District, who will provide a high standard of after-sales service and advice to the new owners.

Man from MANWEB who has been doing the negotiating with the builders is District energy sales engineer Malcolm Cooper.

FINAL REMINDER
Contact Photographic
Competition 1978

Closing date for entries
2nd October 1978

ECONOMY 7

Cheaper Electricity

Two new MANWEB tariffs, offering lower rates for electricity taken at night, will be available for electricity used following customers' first meter readings after October 1st.

The industry's Autumn/Winter advertising, through television, radio, national and local newspapers, magazines and posters, and carried on our own vans, will stress the advantages which the new low rate offers, especially in the fields of home heating and water heating.

Special MANWEB leaflets explaining the new Tariffs and showing how *Electricaire* and storage radiator installations can offer comfort at reduced cost are available to our customers in Board shops and offices. An explanatory "teach-in" was held at

Head Office for senior commercial staffs from Head Office and Districts, and each District followed up with its own meeting arranged by the D.C.E.

All existing customers on 8-hour night tariffs, i.e. 'White Meter' and 'Off-Peak Tariff C' are receiving letters explaining the potential advantages of the new seven-hour tariffs, and inviting them to consider changing over to them.

The new tariffs, like all other electricity tariffs, will, of course, be subject to the Fuel Cost Adjustment mechanism, which reflects changes in the cost of fuel burned at power stations, but there will be no increase in the Fuel Adjustment on customers' bills sent out in the quarter October to December 1978.

below, the new tariff leaflet

THE NEW TARIFFS

The new tariffs will be known as the 'Economy Seven Night and Day Tariff' and the 'Off-Peak Tariff E'. Both offer electricity for seven hours at night at a basic unit price 20% lower than the Board's existing 'White Meter' and 'Off-Peak C' tariffs.

Customers who use off-peak electricity to heat their homes could find their overall electricity bills reduced by around 10% this winter if they choose to switch to one of the new seven-hour tariffs.

The 'Economy Seven Tariff' will be suitable for the Board's 'White Meter' customers, who will be able to take advantage of the new low rates by using electricity for all purposes during the seven-hour night period.

'Off-Peak Tariff E', which offers the new low rate for seven night hours with a lower quarterly fixed charge, will be of benefit to customers using off-peak electricity for heating and water heating only.

The new low prices could also prove attractive to many people who do not at present use off-peak electricity, especially if electric heating is combined with good standards of home insulation.



ECONOMY 7

Seven
hours of
lower price
electricity...
every night

MERSEYSIDE AND NORTH WALES ELECTRICITY BOARD

We get letters

. . . from Oswestry . . .

from a builder at Caersws in our Oswestry District . . .

Dear Sirs,

We would like to thank the electrician who wired the first fixing of the above contract for his high standard of craftsmanship.

The standard is such that it could well justify a photographic record to be used for craft training.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed)

Take a bow **John Humphreys**, an electrician based at Newtown.

* * *

And another for our Oswestry District staff from a consumer who, in the circumstances, must have really appreciated MANWEB service when she wrote . . .

Dear Sir,

I wish to record my appreciation of the very prompt and efficient attention given to my request for repair to my refrigerator last week during what was a very distressing time for me following the sudden death of my husband.

Your co-operation was a great help. Thank you.

Sincerely,

(Signed)

Our man who did this job wishes to remain anonymous.

. . . Sandbach . . .

A customer from Sandbach in our Mid-Cheshire District was so pleased with our service that he took the trouble to write to our Chairman as follows. . .

Dear Mr. Hastings,

I write to tell you how pleased I am with the service and attention that I have been given by your staff recently. Needing to change our fridge, my wife and I called at your Crewe shop on the Saturday afternoon of 17 June. The lady who attended to us was extremely helpful, and advised us

as to the best buy for our requirements. She was not afraid to try to close the sale, which I regard as a very good sign. She was not successful, at first, since we had not looked at any other shops.

We eventually returned, and bought an Electra fridge freezer, since the price was the best we could find for the unit we wanted.

The appliance was delivered on the day that was arranged, and your delivery men were also most helpful in erecting the appliance, clearing away the packings, and explaining in detail to my wife exactly how to use the appliance.

The staff that we have dealt with were clearly anxious to give a good service, and certainly seemed to enjoy their work. So far, the freezer is working well. If your merchandisers are as good at selecting appliances as your staff is at selling and delivering them, I expect to be very satisfied.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed).

Our Chairman duly replied thanking our customers for his gracious praise and for taking the trouble to write the letter.

Our most helpful staff in this case were **Margaret Fisher** from Crewe shop and **Tom Aspinall** (electrician/driver) assisted by **Derek Jones**.

. . . Denbigh . . .

One of our Clwyd District customers living in the Denbigh area had good reason to write the following. . .

Dear Sir,

Further to my telephone conversation with you, I am writing to express my appreciation of the service we received from MANWEB when my next door neighbour and myself were without electricity.

Will you please convey my

grateful thanks to your staff. They worked late under very difficult circumstances and managed to give us temporary power overnight, and returned next morning to complete the job.

Once again, our sincere thanks to all concerned.

Yours faithfully

(Signed)

And all concerned were **H. Williams** (2nd engineer-System) **B. Roberts** (linesman) and **C. Pritchard** (linesman's mate)

* * *

A good team effort by staff in our Clwyd District brought another letter of thanks plus a rather large cheque from one of our customers, who wrote. . .

Dear Sir,

Please find enclosed cheque value £259.20 for the re-wiring of above address.

Will you please thank the inspector, salesman, electrician and anybody else concerned in the prompt, efficient, clean and courteous way this was carried out.

Yours sincerely

(Signed)

The 'team' concerned were—**Ray Walley** (inspector), **Raymond Evans** ("salesman", who is, in fact, a chargehand electrician who was asked by **Tony Standing** (Installation Engineer) to call on the customer), and **Ray Heywood** (electrician) and, not to be overlooked as without her the whole job could have fallen down, **Diane Morgan** (contracting clerk) who processed the paperwork.

. . . Sefton . . .

A rather unusual letter from a Sefton (Merseyside) couple received by DCE Denis Noad, with a special bouquet for Mr. Fred McHugh:

'I am writing to show our appreciation for the help, kindness and patience given to us by Mr. McHugh . . . we had built up a debt of between £80 and £100.

We blamed the central heating and decided not to use it any more so we purchased oil-filled radiators—an error as we found out later.

Our debt didn't decrease, it increased. My husband went to your office very upset, and Mr. McHugh was sent out to help us. At once he was able to tell us what we were doing wrong. As a result our problems are sorted out, we are now practically out of debt, and feel confident about using our heating sensibly in the winter.

We are so grateful to Mr McHugh and we feel others in the same position—I'm sure there must be many—would benefit from his expert help and explanations of central heating.

Yours gratefully

... Aberystwyth ...

From way down in Aberystwyth, a customer had his house rewired by the Board just after it had been decorated throughout. The skill and concern of electrician Ron Davies brought the following response from yet another very satisfied customer.

Dear Mr. Haley,

I am writing to thank you and say how much I appreciated the work carried out at the above

address recently.

The electrician who was here did an excellent job, and he was a most pleasant person.

Thank you so much for all your help during the time of my upheaval.

Yours sincerely
(Signed)

... Gwynedd ...

Man on duty after lunch on a Saturday at Gwynedd District Office received a complaint of 'No supply' at a cottage in Treborth.

Shift electrician Richard M. Owen from Caernarfon called and found a mains fault. He called engineer David Jones who in turn instructed linesman Dewi Salisbury and his mate, G. Cyril Williams to investigate.

They found the fault, repaired it and so restored the supply. Our customer was just as quick at offering his thanks when he wrote. . .

Dear Sir,

It pleases me to be able to write and comment on the pleasant attitude of all three of your engineers who came to 'rescue' me when I visited my cottage yesterday.

This is a difficult address to locate and I was so pleased to receive not only efficient service but plenty of "smiles" to go with it!

Yours etc.
(Signed)

Still in Gwynedd District, help for the Chester Mountaineering Club at their premises at Pen Ceunant Echaf, Llanberis, brought a bright letter of thanks to Pauline E. Jones (clerical assistant-Engineering) who handled the call.

"I refer to our telephone call of Thursday and must thank you for your prompt action.

The work was completed by the time I returned at teatime.

Yours etc.

After a call from Pauline, our linesman Ernest Owen visited the premises and renewed our services up to the meter position.

Maybe the speed of service was in some way due to the fact that Ernest lives only three doors away from the Climbing Club premises!

Nevertheless, it was a very efficient operation—one of many carried out daily by all members of the Board's staff.

Obituary

We deeply regret to record the deaths of our former colleagues.

Mr. Edmund Rogers, aged 59, who worked as an auto-electrician in our transport depot at Legacy.

He started work with the former North Wales Power Company at Legacy in 1934 and was with the Meter Test section prior to working on the VHF systems in Board vehicles.

Mr. Bernard Williams, joined the Board as a labourer in the Clwyd District in 1956. Prior to his retirement due to ill health in 1973, he worked as a joiner's mate.

Mr. William Edward Williams, began his working life in 1934

with the former Rhyl UDC. He later served MANWEB in our Clwyd District as an electrician and was engaged on appliance deliveries.

Mr. Harold Marcroft, a former joiner at Seaview Road and Craven Street, North Wirral, who served the industry for 24 years.

Mr. Fred Bryant, former cashier at Birkenhead and Wallasey shops. Mr. Bryant worked for MANWEB from 1949 to his retirement in 1969, after many years service with Wallasey Corporation.

Mrs. Vi Barford, of our Huyton shop staff. Vi had been in our shops for many years—originally at our former Whitechapel, Liverpool, shop. She had been ill for

some months but had returned to the shop before being taken ill again on holiday.

Mr. John Wynne Roose, a linesman at Rhuddlan. He joined MANWEB in 1952 as a labourer with the Rhuddlan operations gang, later becoming a lineman's mate and subsequently a linesman.

Mr. George Harrison, a shift electrician with North Mersey District prior to his retirement in 1971. Mr. Harrison, who was 69, began a lifetime's service to the industry in 1925.

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