

CONTACT

September 1971



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(See page 180)

Keeping in Touch— After Retirement

A note from M. W. W. Hughes

Since my previous note under this heading was published, suggestions have been received from a couple of pensioners that local associations or groups might be formed in their neighbourhoods for keeping them in touch with retired colleagues and recent developments in the Industry.

In one case, an association already existed in his locality and he has been put in touch with it. There are also such groups in other parts of the MANWEB area—for example in or near Liverpool and Wrexham. They may have been formed by the District Office or by retired staff themselves. If the latter, the District Office no doubt helped if asked. And in some Districts at least, all retired staff are invited to take part in an annual staff conference.

If anyone would like to start or help the formation of a group in his own locality (*and it would be an interesting activity for anybody so inclined*) I am sure the District Administrative Officer would like to hear from him. District Office addresses are on the back of the Board's recently revised bill forms.

The Editor of 'Contact' would be more than pleased to receive notes from existing or new groups about their activities and particularly about individual ex-MANWEB "characters" in them.

Those who live some distance away from a group will have been interested in a prominent editorial note in the July 1971 'Contact.' For the benefit of those who missed seeing it, here it is again.

"Retired recently . . . ? Or not so recently . . . ?"

Your old friends and colleagues will be more than interested to know how you are getting along . . . enjoying your free time and hobbies . . . and dealing with the problems which retirement brings to everyone.

Why not drop a line to the Editor, 'Contact,' MANWEB, Sealand Road, Chester? We would be delighted to hear from you—and to publish letters and articles of interest to other retired MANWEB people, and those facing retirement in the near future."



Lord Mowbray listens as Miss Barbara Strange (*energy sales demonstrator*) extols the benefits of electricity in home improvements. Also in the picture is Mr. D. E. Noad (*District Commercial Engineer*), right, and Mr. D.St. C. Barrie (*Energy Sales Engineer*), left.

(*'Southport Visitor'* picture)

Home Improvement Exhibition at Southport

When officially opening the recent "Home Improvement" Exhibition at Southport, Lord Mowbray, Upper House Spokesman on Home Improvement Grant matters drew attention to the increase in importance which the Government placed on the improvement of the older houses, especially those built around 50 years ago.

On the Board's stand at the exhibition were staff from our North Mersey District who encouraged tenants and landlords whose houses qualify for grants to use electricity in their modernisation programme.

They have been very successful in Bootle where the local Council are to instal Electricaire units in 106 older-type Council houses.



THE STAFF MAGAZINE OF THE MERSEYSIDE
AND NORTH WALES ELECTRICITY BOARD

CONTACT

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Building up People . . .

THERE IS a widely-supported school of thought which maintains that exposure to adversity creates a strong character.

While a too-prolonged exposure to the rough side of life will almost certainly warp many personalities, most people would agree that a tough time in moderation, particularly when faced by teenagers, acts in much the same way on the spirit as a disease inoculation does on the body, and equips the person concerned to cope more effectively with adverse circumstances later in life.

Most men in the older generation had little choice in the matter, and millions of middle-aged personalities were forged, to some extent at least, in the furnace of war.

For most of today's young people, however, military service is something in the history books (or on the TV screen), and not a few, we suspect, roundly resent the frequently-voiced suggestion that it would "do them the world of good!"

Fortunately war is not the only way in which young people can meet testing circumstances. The mountains and the sea offer their perpetual challenge, and show little mercy to the foolhardy. Large numbers of young people seek them out of their own accord.

At the same time, industry as a whole takes advantage of the opportunities offered by organisations such as Outward Bound and the Sail Training Association to send promising young men (and women) on character-forming and personality-testing courses, and this number of *Contact* contains accounts by three young MANWEB colleagues lucky enough to be chosen.

* We can only repeat the advice of all who have been on such courses. . . . "If you get the chance . . . grab it!"

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

The closing date for entries has now been extended to
MONDAY, 25th OCTOBER 1971

Across the North Sea

by Mr. M. J. C. Macdonald

AT 2-30 p.m. on a Sunday a few weeks ago I boarded the "Malcolm Miller" sail-training ship. She was tied up in Middlesborough Harbour. I was met by Mr. Roger Shales, my Watch Leader, and he allocated me my bunk.

After being kitted out with sea-going clothes, I joined 38 trainees as we were split into three watches. These were named after the sails—fore, main and mizzen. I was in the fore-watch under our Watch Officer, Mr. Maufe who came from Norfolk.

We toured the ship and Mr. Shales led the way up the rigging to the crow's nest for those who wanted to go—not me! We had to learn about the sails. There was the foresail, the fore top sail, the stay sail, the inner jib, the outer jib and the jib top sail—these were the six we had to learn about immediately, but eventually we had to know them all. Mr. Maufe decided to put us through our paces by putting up then stowing the inner jib. What a mess! Still, it was our first attempt.

The sea air made me hungry and I was glad when it was time to go below for our first meal on board. It was very good. If the cook maintained this standard I should be more than pleased. During the meal we were pumped with information about the ship and the do's and don'ts of hygiene.

After the permanent crew came aboard, the Captain gave us a short talk about the running of the ship. We were then left to the devices of the Watch Leaders.

The following morning we were up at 7 o'clock and had breakfast at 7.20 a.m. We were on deck at 7.58 a.m. for fire drill, lifeboat drill and "abandon ship" drill. Next on the agenda was the complicated business of "how to go about"—turn around, to the non-nautical minded. After moving out to anchor from the dock side, we learned how to launch the motor-boat and finally how to steer the ship.

At 2.00 p.m. we got underway. With surprisingly

little difficulty we left Middlesborough Harbour under power. Once clear we set sail. Having practised one watch at a time, we now had a full crew on deck, each with their own jobs. I don't think we did too badly, but it took a long time. The weather was clearing—it had rained all the time we had been in harbour.

The ship pitched and rolled and I didn't feel too good, but on deck I felt much better. Most of the



A fresh breeze heels the "Malcolm Miller" to leeward and makes walking on the sloping deck very difficult.

lads seemed worse than I was, and were hanging over the lee rail. Mr. Shales, our Watch Leader, was sick before any of us—but afterwards he looked right as rain. We dropped anchor in Robin Hood's Bay, off Whitby, for the night. I was on watch from 4.00 a.m. until 6.00 a.m. and when I went below it was time for a wash, and to wait for breakfast. All hands were on deck at 8.00 a.m., armed with scrubbing brushes and metal polish. This lasted until 10.00 a.m., when we went aft to lie down on the lifeboats. By this time most of the crew were hanging over the lee rail, getting rid of their breakfast!

Having set sail again, I was on the middle watch—12 o'clock midnight to 4.00 a.m. We did one hour on, and one hour off. My first hour was spent on note-book duty—noting ships sighted and, on the hour, our speed plus the weather conditions. This was the cushiest job. The second hour of our watch

OUR COVER PICTURE should bring delight to the heart of all mariners, ancient or otherwise, as the sail-training ship "Malcolm Miller" beats up to windward on a starboard tack.

was my first time at the helm. At first I was a little apprehensive, but found it easy really.

When our watch ended and I went back to bed the "Malcolm Miller" was well on her way to Esbjerg. At 8.00 a.m. it was back to the scrubbing and polishing, and again I didn't feel so good. The scrubbing helped me a little, but what cured me was the bo'sun. He was hosing the deck with a fire hose and I got in the way—I think it shocked the sea sickness out of me. I enjoyed my dinner.

We did not spot many vessels on our way—just a container ship, and an impressive-looking passenger liner, all lit up. We sighted Esbjerg at 12.30 p.m., and docked at 2.00 p.m. Most of the lads went ashore by 3.30 p.m. I was left on board in the galley helping to prepare tea (*part of my day duty*), but I managed a trip around the town in the evening.

On Friday, after cleaning the half deck, we went ashore again at 9.30 a.m. and bought souvenirs. We sailed at 2.00 p.m., leaving harbour with the aid of a



"All tiddley up aloft" as the young crew of the "Malcolm Miller" soon get to know the ropes, and the sails.

tug and headed out towards the Dogger Bank for the winds to take us towards the Channel Islands. The winds proved favourable to take us to Dunkirk, so we changed our destination. The weather on our voyage was a mixed bag, from being becalmed to battling through a squall. During the latter the sea was lapping at the side of the bridge, and we lost a lifebelt overboard—I nearly joined it when a shipmate skidded over the 45-degree deck and knocked my legs from under me.

We reached Dunkirk before midnight, after several days sailing, and having dropped anchor at a position given to us over the radio, the pilot ship came along side and told us to move—I am not sure what the No. 1 said but I am sure it wasn't English!

I went below and had sandwiches and coffee, and "died" in my bunk. I was brought "alive" again at 6.00 a.m. by being yanked from my bunk.

Working before breakfast—it doesn't seem right. Being in port we had to wear grey shirts—they are very itchy! We scrubbed the deck, polished the brasses, had breakfast and then helped the engineer painting. The engine room is a real sweat-shop, and is kept as clean as a hospital. Shore leave came at 12 noon, and in the evening we all went together with the officers and showed the French how to sing.

Leaving Dunkirk we headed out to sea. A hovercraft floated past—it came in close to our stern, slowed down, then flew away. We dropped anchor and had a chance for a swim. The bo'sun, up to his tricks, dumped scraps overboard near the ladder as someone dived in. As the water was cold the swimmer headed back for the ladder and had the choice of swimming through the rubbish or staying in the water for about 15 minutes.

On our last day at sea, we caught 60 mackerel in about half an hour, which our practical joker of a bo'sun tipped through a hatch onto half a dozen lads having coffee. Did they smell!!

As we sailed close to the South Coast of England we could see boats leaving Shoreham and Brighton to have a look at us. We made a good show for the locals, and docked at Shoreham, after 1,040 miles at sea, nearly all under sail. We felt quite proud of ourselves. That evening we attended a dance at the Shoreham Club.

We finally disembarked on Saturday morning in time for the 9.10 from Brighton. The Captain said it was the second-best cruise he had ever had and, out of 73, that's not bad. Although we all now went our separate ways we will meet again next year at the reunion.

I should like to take this chance to thank everyone who helped me on the course, directly or indirectly and I hope the next person to be sent by MANWEB will enjoy himself, and learn as much from his cruise, as I have from mine.

THE AUTHOR

of this article, Mr. John Charles Macdonald, lives in Waterloo, just outside Liverpool. He joined the Board in 1958 as a student engineer. He went to Birkenhead Technical College for a special workshop course for one year and did well enough to qualify for an Honours Degree Course at the University of Salford where he has just started on his second year. He is a former pupil of the Crosby County Secondary School and the Southport Technical College where he studied for his "A" levels.

The Boys at Brathay Hall

by M. J. Christopher Jones



For the past six months, Chris has been working as a clerk at our District Office in Aberystwyth. He is very keen on sport, especially boxing and football, but since completing his Course at Brathay Hall, he has now taken up additional interests—drama and sailing. He wants to get established in his work as quickly as possible as a solid foundation for his career.

OWING to examinations, I arrived a day late at Brathay Hall, Ambleside. Consequently, on my first day, it was a case of "straight in at the deep end." I was immediately introduced to one of the instructors who showed me to a room where the lads from our dormitory were being given map-reading lessons. I gained the impression that the course was going to be tough but not too bad. After settling down and having been introduced to the rest of the lads I felt a little happier.

I soon realised there was always something to do, the main activities of the course being mountaineering, boating, drama and art.

Whilst on the mountains we covered an average of about twelve to fifteen miles a day, starting at approximately 9.30 a.m. and finishing about 4.30 p.m. We climbed most of the 3,000-ft-high peaks, such as Helvellyn and Bow Fell. During the course we were taken into the mountains by the instructors about six times. After the first three trips, and when the instructor was confident in our ability to find our way around safely, he would suddenly dart off, taking the hardest short cuts to arrive at a certain point about ten to fifteen minutes ahead and greet us with comments like, "What took you so long."

Each trip into the mountains was split into sections. There were nine lads in our dormitory. Consequently our trips were split into nine sections, to give each of us a chance to lead on one of the sections. The responsibility during these periods was on the shoulders of the leader. Of course we each had a responsibility all of the time, but more so as a leader. After our first six trips into the hills we went on a two-day expedition with our instructor. This meant an extra load on our backs, as all the tents and cooking gear had to be taken with us, the total weight being around 40 lbs!

Our first day was very long and we didn't arrive at our camp site until 7.30 p.m. We felt too tired to erect the tents or to cook, but it had to be done. After a good meal, everyone took off their boots to admire their blisters and to bathe their feet in the river. We turned in about 9.30 p.m. It was lucky we did, as we were called next morning at 5.45 a.m. The idea of such an early start was that it would be fairly cool and we could progress better.

Our reward for setting off so early was that we arrived back at the hostel at 2.30 p.m. We thought we would have a nice rest for the remainder of the day, but no—we had to grab a blackboard, draw a simple map, and prepare a report to be made during the evening in everyone's presence. This was an excellent idea, as the dormitories could compare their trips. Any faults or virtues of one dormitory could be picked up and noted by others. Some of the lads thought this might be a bore, but afterwards they all admitted it was very interesting.

On our next trip we were on our own for a day on the mountains without instructors. We had an excellent day, the weather was perfect, and we found out our own faults.

The climax of these exercises was a three-day expedition on our own. The first day was perfect and we made camp at about 4.30 p.m. The second day started off alright, but ended not at all well. I had a head cold before I started out, and overnight it got onto my chest. By the end of the second day I was having difficulty in breathing but decided to continue. At 7 o'clock it was decided the mountain rescue team should be called out as I could not go up or down without fighting for breath. The rescue team arrived at about midnight, and I was taken to Keswick Hospital

(Continued on page 184)

The Girls at Rhowniar

by

Miss P. Meryl Hughes

I THINK the best way to start this report is by stressing that, whatever I may write down, I really did enjoy the course. It WAS hard work but it was specially designed for normal, healthy girls whether working or in school, to show them that they are capable of more than they thought—and this is exactly what it does.

There were 72 girls on the course I was on. We were split up into seven groups, each having the name of a range of mountains. The name of my group was Berwyn—the Berwyn range stretching from South-West of Llangollen to South of Bala Lake. Each group had an instructress who was responsible for her group all the way through the course. Berwyn's instructress' name was Viga who was young and very brown. On arrival Viga showed us to our dormitory and then interviewed us all individually, asking about our hobbies, jobs and background. This interview broke down any fear that the instructors would be ogres who would treat us as children.

The groups were specially selected so that no one knew another person in that group before coming on the course—so the first day was spent getting to know the other girls in my group, though I got to know them a whole lot better in the following four weeks! The girls came from as far as Glasgow, London and Devon though in other groups there was an American, Canadian and even a Norwegian. Consequently there was a little difficulty with accents to begin with but at the end of the course everybody ended up with a terribly mixed up accent!

The first week was pretty boring as we were doing theory work to prepare us for the real thing and I think nearly everybody was getting tired of staying in the grounds of the school. It was during the first week that several of the girls asked if they could go home but the Warden persuaded them to stay for another week to see how they liked it. Later

Meryl is 19-years-old and works as a control clerk in our computer section at Sealand Road. She joined the Board when she left school two-and-a-half years ago.

Attractive and full of life, she likes reading and dancing, but most of all, her real enjoyment comes from playing the guitar and singing folk songs. Her immediate ambition is to be part of a 'famous' folk group, then she would like to *live a little* before settling down to married life.



they admitted that they were glad they had stayed.

I enjoyed the canoeing very much. We had to learn how to capsize and be able to get out, how to stop capsizing, how to steer a canoe to go certain directions and be able to straighten your course. The most exciting part of the canoeing course was in the last session when we went surf canoeing in the sea at Towyn, this was an experience I'm glad I didn't miss.

The first mountain walking expedition was the hardest as we had to get used to the heavy packs on our backs, the new walking boots and the long, uphill climbs. Most of us felt very depressed climbing up the hill but when we reached the top we were so inspired by the view that we thought it was all worth while. The second expedition, up Cader Idris, was not half as bad as everybody was expecting. Although we were carrying extra weight on our backs we soon got used to the weight and everybody seemed quite happy. The final expedition lasted three days and combined everything we had learned—leadership, map-reading, reading a compass, camping, pushing yourself onwards (there were some pretty high mountains that we didn't have to climb if we didn't want to gain points) and most important, being able to get on with the girls in your group.

I found rock climbing the most challenging subject on the course as I was scared of heights. Although we

(Continued overleaf)

were perfectly safe if we fell (*we had life lines on which we were attached to the instructress*) there was always the distraction of the distance between yourself and the ground. Whenever I reached the top of a climb I found I was shaking, but Viga said it was not worry but the nerves releasing themselves after being held tense. None of the climbs were easy and they got increasingly harder so that you found yourself relying on the narrowest of ledges or even just an uneven surface for support but because the soles of the boots would not bend the foot would not slip.

House of Hospitality

Light relief from all the strenuous activities was a visit to an old cottage called Dolysbyty—translated means House of Hospitality—where there was one long bed in which all of us slept in our sleeping bags. In the evening we had a good old fashioned sing song around a log fire—as I had taken my guitar and Pat (*from Scotland*) had taken her accordion. Unfortunately this only lasted one night and all the next day we were back working hard with the forestry commission—setting up picnic areas, cutting down and trimming trees.

One of the indoor activities was drama and I think everybody looked forward to these sessions as they were so different from what we were expecting. The drama instructor was young and consequently her methods of teaching people how to express themselves in movement were modern and very interesting. The same instructor took us for effective speaking which was another challenge for me, as I don't think I'm capable of giving an interesting speech. In the three one-hour sessions we had of effective speaking we had to give three different speeches, getting progressively harder. The

first one we had no time to prepare, giving brief details of where we live, work and how we came to be on the course. The second we were given five minutes to prepare a speech on a subject picked out of a hat and finally we had all the spare time we had for two weeks to prepare a speech on a subject of our own choice. Most people were worried about this last speech counting on the others in the group to look interested when it came their turn to speak!

In the grounds of the school there were two rope courses—these were like mini-assault courses which you have to get around without touching the ground. These were not dangerous as the first was not too high off the ground and we had safety ropes for the second, which was up in the tree tops.

My attitude at the beginning of the course was, "What good can it do me apart from making me a bit fitter"—but it is surprising what it does do, not only physically, but mentally as well. Everything was in some way connected with our characters whether it was to try before saying "I can't," to join in the fun or to stay out, to laugh and joke (*about yourself sometimes*), to help others do things they found difficult or even to stand by and give encouragement, to lead when asked to lead and not to leave it to someone else, to let others lead when asked to and not to push yourself forward. All these show not only others, but yourself as well, what type of a character you have and you can then try to put the bad points right. It is one thing to know your bad points and another to put them right.

Now I've been on the course, seen my own capabilities and disabilities, seen my good points and my bad points, I can start to use the former and put the latter right.

I thoroughly enjoyed the course and I am very grateful to MANWEB for sponsoring me.

BRATHAY HALL—Continued

where I was told the verdict was over-exhaustion on a bad chest.

The rest of the lads continued on until the end of their third day—hard luck lads! The strange thing was that things like this happen, and yet the lads were allowed to smoke. To me this seemed utterly ridiculous.

During the boating lessons we had sailing and rowing instruction. We progressed slowly but surely with the rowing, having obstacle races and the regular mile races. Sailing was a bit slower. We were capsized two

or three times and ran into each other once, but during our regatta, we had an overall position of second place, coming second in the obstacle rowing, first in the mile, and second and third in the sailing races.

Our other events—art and drama—were minor compared with the mountaineering and boating. Art was only a bit of a change from the other events. We had only about six one-hour lessons, during which time we did book binding, lino cutting, free hand drawing and painting. Our drama lessons were a case of

learning a very long serious play for our last evening at the hall. They enjoyed this drama so much that the lads in our dormitory decided to write our own sketch, which really was funny. The last week of our course was the climax, with our three-day expedition, the regatta, and the play.

All-in-all I enjoyed myself thoroughly, and would willingly go again, given the opportunity. One or two minor items could have been tightened up, such as the smoking I have already mentioned. Otherwise it was worth every penny spent.

Talking Notes

AWARD FOR AN IDEA

A MAN who thinks about his job as he does it is **Mr. Ken L. Jones**, a fourth assistant engineer on production control based at Head Office. For using his brains and putting his ideas forward to the right quarter, Ken recently received a cheque for £20 as an award under the Board's Suggestion Scheme.

Ken's idea this time, was for a yoke sling and snatch block hanger, technical terms for a device for lifting and holding steady, aluminium conductors.

Before this invention was put forward, there was always a danger of conductors being damaged as they

has won an award from the Suggestions Scheme. Several years ago, he designed a tool for finishing off the wire ends of the pole stays, and we believe that the idea is still being widely used today.

When not thinking of ways to make the job safer, quicker or easier, Ken who lives at Pant Glas near Caernarvon spends his time on his hobbies—photography and bees.

As a photographer we hope to see some of his work in this year's 'Contact' Photographic Competition—when he could win more money. As an apiarist with three hives of very active bees, it is honey not money that interests him.

Overseas Visitors

During the summer months, many members of our staff came into contact with at least one of the three special overseas visitors to our Board.

Mr. A. Fakhimi, an Iranian who is the Head of Operations Department, Provincial Areas, for the Tehran Electric Company, was with us for eleven weeks. During this time he

worked at Head Office and in three of our Districts as well as visiting power stations in North Wales.

Before he returned home, via the London Electricity Board, **Mr. Fakhimi** expressed his gratitude for the very warm welcome he received and for the great trouble so many MANWEB staff took to give him a wide ranging experience.

Two other guests of the Board were sponsored by the International Association for the Exchange of Students.

From Canada came **Mr. D. Prowse** whose home town is Pipestone in Manitoba. He is employed by the Manitoba Hydro Electric Company and studies at the University of Manitoba.

Finally we had **Mr. S. Czarnocki** from Brussels in Belgium. He spent some of his time in the North Mersey District and the rest at Head Office. He is a student at the University of Louvain.

Re-appointment

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has authorised the re-appointment of **Major A. S. D. Graesser**, as a part-time member of our Board.

Wedding Bells

We offer our best wishes and bon voyage to **Miss June Allen**, a clerk in Head Office Accounts Department, who recently married **Mr. Peter**



Mr. Parker, right, hands over the £20 cheque to Mr. Jones.

were being lifted into place high on the poles. The new yoke sling however is designed to lift the conductors safely and the snatch block hanger holds them in position while the linesmen work on them.

Ken received his cheque from **Mr. M. M. Parker** (Secretary and Solicitor) who explained that it was a National Award, Mr. Jones having already received two local awards. He said that there was a good chance of Ken receiving further awards as other Board's got to know of his idea and adopted it.

This is the second time that Ken

Our visitors from across the waters, from left to right, Messrs. D. Prowse, A. Fakhimi and S. Czarnocki.





Mr. and Mrs. Griffiths

Griffiths an engineer from Chester. The wedding took place at Upton Parish Church on Bank Holiday Monday and the lucky couple have now gone to live in the Bahamas.

It was ring-a-ding time too for **Mr. Philip Ramsey** when he was married to **Miss Patricia Lloyd** a short time ago at St. Mark's Methodist Church in Southport.

Philip, who is 23-years-old, is now working as a general assistant engineer at Head Office.

In the early days of his apprenticeship he succeeded in gaining a place to carry out full-time studies at the Birkenhead Technical College for the Ordinary National Diploma. This led to a four-year Sandwich Course at the University of Salford.

He completed this a short time ago in fine style by obtaining a First Class Bachelor of Science Degree with Honours in Electrical Engineer-

Mr. and Mrs. Ramsey



ing. Philip received his degree from the Vice Chancellor of the University, Dr. Whitworth.

Shop Thief!

Our shop staffs have to be 'on the ball' these days, and in fact they are. This was proved recently when at our Allerton shop in Liverpool, two ladies entered shortly after the lunchtime break.

Mrs. Edna Healey, one of the shop assistants went over to them and as one of the 'customers' talked to her about a spin dryer, the other woman moved over to another part of the shop to the shelf displays of small electrical appliances.

Edna's sixth sense told her that something was happening and out of the corner of her eye she kept a close watch on the other woman. She quickly noticed that an electric toaster was missing from its place on a shelf, and as she moved over to join the woman she saw the flex from the toaster in her bag.

Keeping her cool, Edna allowed the two ladies to walk out of the shop and as soon as they were on the street, she followed them and said quietly, "I think you had better come back inside for I have reason to believe that you have a toaster in your bag."

The woman paused and then said, "Yes I have." Her companion ran off.

The police then came in on the scene and Edna, the toaster and the shoplifter were taken along to the local 'lock-up' where statements were taken.

A job for Wimpey's

A pat on the back for our engineering staff was recently given in a letter from the Electrical Engineer of the George Wimpey Company. It reads as follows:

Dear Sirs,

We have been advised by our Resident Construction Manager, Mr. H. S. Simpson, that the installation and changeover of the new 11-kV supply to the new and existing Champion factories are now complete. He tells me that the work was carried out smoothly and ahead of programme.

We would thank you for the effort made by your Department and for Mr. Cave's co-operation in this not uncomplicated task.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed)

Purchasing Officer

A new face to be seen around Head Office belongs to **Mr. Keith W. Sowden** our new Commercial Purchasing Officer.

Keith, who is 35-years-old joined

us from the Boots Pure Drug Company where he was employed as their buyer for the many small electrical appliances sold in the Boots and Timothy Whites stores throughout the country. He has also worked with the Lucas Company and the Hotpoint Company.

Born in Hull, Yorkshire, Keith was educated at Chesterfield School and later gained an Arts degree in Commerce at Manchester University.

He enjoys playing golf and boating, and prefers taking a winter holiday so that he can go ski-ing.

EEIBA Visit Bomb Victims

A few weeks ago many of us were shocked to read of the bomb blast at the Electricity Board Headquarters in Belfast, in which one man was killed and many members of the staff seriously injured.

Almost immediately, families of the bomb victims were contacted by the EEIBA's local representatives.

Help has been given and the Association is keeping in close touch with the situation in case any further assistance is needed.

Slow and Easy

Last December, **Mr. Fred Sharp** retired from his job as linesman's mate at our Mold Depot.

A very popular character in the area and well-known throughout North Wales, 61-year-old Fred popped-up again in the news when he and his ten-year-old horse 'Britannia Darkie' took a pleasant caravan journey to Appleby Horse Fair in Westmorland.

The one-horse power transport travelled some 435 miles and took a month to do it.

They covered around 15 to 20 miles each day through some beautiful countryside and, according to Fred, "met some marvellous people."

Birth

Our congratulations go to **Mr. Peter Smith** and his wife **Margaret** on the birth of a son, **Andrew Peter**.

Pop is a senior instructor at our Hoylake Training Centre.

Thanks from Bob

Many people from Head Office and from our Pumpfields Depot in Liverpool will be pleased to hear that **Mr. Bob Russell**, a former driver, is now back home slowly recovering from his major operation.

Bob sends his sincere thanks to the many friends who visited him or wrote to him in hospital.



Head Office Commercial staff surround Mr. Uttley, right, as he receives his parting gifts from Mr. Shires.

Charles the Gas

We don't mind taking good men from the Gas Board to join our staff, but we always think it a sad day when we lose a good man to them. This happened recently when **Mr. Charles Uttley**, marketing assistant in our Commercial Department left us to join the Wales Gas Board.

Charles was well-known and well-liked by everyone he worked with.

He was responsible for producing the lively sales staff letters and his ability as a short story writer was proved in "Contact" on many occasions.

Colleagues at Head Office wished him every success in his new job as Advertising Officer with Wales Gas and hoped that his electrical background would show through in future gas ads! They presented him with a

number of gifts which were handed over by **Mr. Bill Shires** (Deputy Chief Commercial Officer).

"Girl from MANWEB"

Entries have already started to roll in for the competition to find the "Girl from MANWEB—1972."

Our first two entries, from the Districts, look very promising if the names they are known by is any guide. One is from 'Bubbles' and the other from 'Sweetie Pie.'

Course 249 at Wallasey

MANWEB staff on a sales training course visited the Display Section at Head Office to see how their showcards and window displays are produced.

Top picture, from left to right: Mr. G. A. S. Lewer (Display Leader, Head Office), Mrs. Edna Byrne (Kirkby St. Chads), Messrs. David Martin (Clwyd District), Wyn Williams (Aberystwyth District) and David Marchant (North Mersey District) and Miss Pat Huntbach (Crewe).

Bottom picture, from left to right: Mrs. Barbara Shaw (Bootle), Mrs. Pat Reed (Southport), Mr. Lewer, Mr. Tony Wilcox (assistant, Display), Mrs. Marion McIvor (Norris Green) and Mrs. Jean Parry (Rhyl).



Instant Contact

MANWEB'S

VHF

RADIO SYSTEM

"*BD to Z Victor One*" is a very well-worn piece of TV dialogue from the BBC's "*Z Cars*." It is the 'call-sign' from the base station to one of the crime patrol cars.

This programme illustrates the importance of the radio-telephone in police work, but not so many people know that VHF radio also plays an im-

Electrician Geoff. Howarth based at New Crane Street, calls up his base station for further instructions.



portant part in the day-to-day work of MANWEB.

The speed with which our engineers can operate in an emergency largely depends on their communications with base, and the same applies to the Commercial department's appliance repair staff. Radio communication means time and money savings by the Board, and allows us to give a more efficient service.

About 600 MANWEB vehicles are equipped with mobile transmitters and receivers, and these are in contact with 25 base transmitting stations. Each District has roughly 60 vehicles, divided more or less equally between Engineering and Commercial departments, complete with mobile radio sets.

Following the re-organisation of our Districts it is intended to have one base station operating in each District, on its own frequency. There will be exceptions, owing to the rugged nature of the terrain in some parts of the MANWEB area. For example, the old Caernarvon District had five base stations, and these are still operative in the new Gwynedd District to maintain radio contact with vehicles in the valleys in the locality.

Co-incidentally with the MANWEB re-organisation from 18 to ten Districts, there has been a move by the Joint Radio Committee of the Nationalised Power Industries and the Post Office to re-allocate broadcasting frequencies.

These new frequencies are in the mid-band of VHF in the 136-megahertz (*the new term for megacycles*) range, for the base stations, and the 106 megahertz range for the mobile units.

Each MANWEB District will eventually have its own frequency, within a few kilohertz of these new wavelengths.

At present there are two frequency ranges in operation in the Board's area, one in the higher band range around 176 megahertz, and the other in the lower waveband of 72 megahertz.

Mid-Cheshire is the first District to operate on the new wavelengths. This has presented problems as the combination of the Northwich and Crewe Districts has created a different geographical shape, and parts of the District are not adequately covered from the existing transmitter at Crewe.

Experiments at Newton Firs

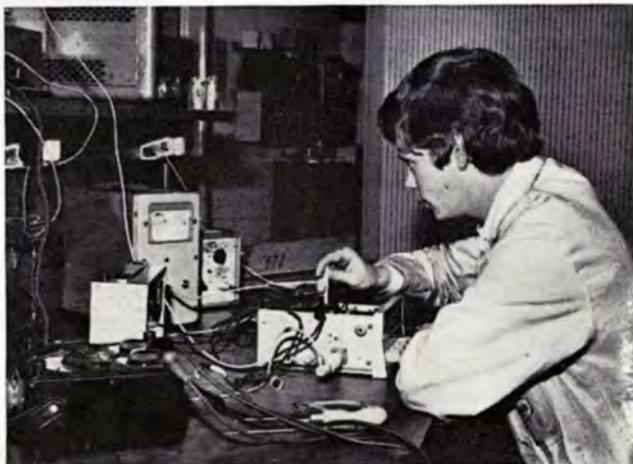
Mr. Brian Nield, our telecommunications development engineer at Head Office, has been conducting experiments from a new site at Newton Firs. The Gas Board already have a transmitting station on this site, and it is with their co-operation that Mr. Nield has been carrying out his tests. From the results so far, it appears that this site is proving very successful not only for covering Mid-Cheshire, but it seems ideal for South Lancashire District as well.

The programme of change-over involves a lot of work. The shape of the new Districts, and the new



Telecommunications foreman Mike Lewis at work in the Technical Workshop repairing a VHF mobile radio telephone, surrounded by a mass of electronic equipment.

Philip Mills (*instrument inspector*) working on a Pye mobile radio telephone, tuning for maximum power output.



Instrument inspector, Dave Watts working on a converter on an Ultra set to allow vehicle battery polarity to be changed.



The latest "I.T.T." mobile radio telephone being put through field tests on the new-band frequencies to the base at Newton Firs. The man doing the testing is Brian Nield, our telecommunications development engineer.

wavebands, may require the re-siting of transmitting base stations, and vehicles must be fitted with modified sets. It is intended to complete the change-over within three years, and work will be carried out on a District-to-District basis.

The task of carrying out the servicing work will be that of the Technical Workshop at New Crane Street, Chester. Here the VHF sets and special equipment for telecommunications are repaired. In addition other work for the Engineering Department, testing and developing power system protection and voltage control equipment, is also carried out.

When the new stations are operative it will mean an even faster more efficient communications service between outside staffs and their bases, and this can only mean a better service to the customer.



Haven for the Old Folk



The Plas Pen Gwaith Home for the Elderly at Llanberis showing the administrative and staff block, *on the right*, the recreation room, *centre*, and one of the residential blocks, *on the left*.

ALL THE comforts of home—combined with the security of welfare and domestic staff—are provided for 35 lucky elderly people who have moved into the Plas Pen Gwaith Home for the Elderly, formally opened a short time ago by the Chairman of Caernarvon County Council, (Ald. O. G. Roberts).

The Plas Pen Gwaith Home is situated at Llanberis and electricity plays a big part in providing the comfort and amenities which the Home ensures for its residents.

This socially progressive venture was designed and built by the Council to provide accommodation, catering and recreational facilities, and care. Domestic staff are employed to give a 24-hour health and welfare service.

The Home consists of four single-storey residential blocks and a two-storey administrative block, which are interconnected by the main corridor. Each residential block houses eight or nine people, mainly in single rooms which are heated by electric storage radiators. Washbasins in each room are supplied with constant hot water from a large electrically-heated hot water cylinder installed in each block. This cylinder also supplies the bathroom of each block where, heating for the bathrooms and toilets is by underfloor electric cables, with each bathroom having an additional infra-red ceiling heater.

A lounge-cum-dining room is situated in each of the residential buildings. A temperature of 70°F (21°C) is maintained with the aid of electric storage radiators supplemented by electric fires and convectors.

The administrative block houses the medical and welfare offices, laundry, airing room and main kitchen. The main heating in this building is from floorwarming cables and two Electricaire units have also been installed to provide extra heat should it be needed.

The laundry has an automatic commercial washing machine for use by the residents, together with a number of electric irons. Hot water for the laundry and the kitchen comes from a 100 gallon hot water storage cylinder heated by electric immersion heaters.

The kitchen contains electric catering and refrigeration equipment, and it is intended to cook food here for the local 'Meals on Wheels' service. Food for the residents is transported from the kitchen to each dining room in an electrically heated trolley.

The matron's and assistant matron's flats are on the second floor of the administrative building. Both of these are all-electric with a combination of Electricaire central heating, infra-red heater in the bathroom, and coal effect fire in the lounge. Both have an electric cooker and a refrigerator.

In addition to the lounge-dining area in each residential block there is a large recreation room where all residents can meet, join in discussions and enjoy communal activities. This room is bright and pleasantly furnished with a constant temperature of 70°F provided by the electrical floor warming and electric storage radiators.

A sophisticated fire alarm system has been installed. This operates automatically by heat detectors, or can be operated manually. The fire call could be transmitted automatically via a 999 line

The bright and attractively furnished recreation room where all residents can meet in pleasant surroundings to join in discussions and enjoy communal activities. Electric floor warming and storage radiators keep the temperature at a comfortable 70°F.



to the G.P.O. and the Fire Brigade. When the alarm operates it releases the fire doors, which are normally held open by magnetic catches.

The Home has a special 'bleep' system for summoning urgent medical aid. This electronic alarm indicator enables residents to call for help from anywhere in the building. Push buttons in the toilets, recreation room and lounges, plus a pull-switch in their own bedroom, operate a 'pocket paging bleep' device carried by staff on duty as well as buzzers in the matron's office, the staff bedroom and the kitchen. An indicator board lights up outside

the matron's office showing from where the distress call emanates. A light outside the room also speeds up the answer to the call.

A battery-operated emergency lighting system has been installed to provide adequate lighting in an emergency. The complete electrical system for the Home was installed by MANWEB's Gwynedd District staff and involves some 370 kw of load. Electricity was chosen because of its flexibility, efficiency, cleanliness, overall economy and its ability to provide an environmental suitable for the needs of the residents and staff.

One of the homes within a home. A neat, clean and airy bedroom, heated by electric storage radiator, and with constant hot water in the washbasin. By the bedside is a pull-switch which the resident may use to summon help quickly if necessary.



All-Electric Housing in Rural Shropshire



"I love it! Love it I do!!"

"If you paid me £1,000 I wouldn't move now!"

"I love every brick in my flat and with electric heating its summer all year round."

These are just a few of the reactions of delighted occupants who have moved into North Shropshire Rural District Council's all-electric flats at Newtown, Yardington, Whitchurch, recently, and they are typical of the feelings of the people who now find themselves living in conditions of comfort and convenience which they never dreamed possible.

It was a visit to all-electric flats at Preston by members and officers of the Council which led to the decision to go ahead with an all-electric project at Whitchurch. The development consists of 48 flats—24 with one bedroom, 18 with two bedrooms and six with three bedrooms—together with six three-bedroomed houses. Electricaire units ranging

in size from six to ten kilowatts have been installed to take care of all-round-the-home comfort heating, and 40 and 50-gallon "White Wolf" water cylinders have been installed to provide lashings of hot water to meet every home demand.

Tenants are finding their heating and hot water costs surprisingly light, and typical examples range from £1.17 a week for a one bedroomed flat occupied by a retired couple, £1.66 for a two-bedroomed home housing a couple and a baby, and £2.82 for a three-bedroomed dwelling occupied by two adults (*working irregular hours*) and two teenage children.

The electrical installations were carried out by MANWEB's Oswestry District staff, who have also been responsible for recent Electricaire installations in 16 flats at Sudbury, six old people's bungalows at Ash, and ten bungalows at Tilstock, on behalf of the same local authority.



Left: Mrs. Norma Preece, energy sales demonstrator at Oswestry, shows Mrs. Edge, one of the new tenants, how quick and clean electric cooking really is.

Right: Norma with Mr. Ron Williams (District Commercial Engineer) doing a check reading on the meters installed in a box unit outside the entrance to each flat.



Friends gather round as Mr. Flanagan, centre, says his farewell to Mr. A. R. Cooper (District Engineer).



(Runcorn Guardian photograph)

≡ RETIREMENTS ≡

Mr. J. FLANAGAN

A man who leads a pretty full life, retired recently after 26 years' as a garage foreman at Runcorn. This period of time made Mr. James Flanagan the longest serving foreman in the District.

After his days work with the Board, he usually turns his attention to the activities the R.A.F. Association in which he is a most active member, and is area organiser for the Wings Week Annual Appeal in aid of the R.A.F. Convalescent Homes.

Way back in 1944, James became an active serving member of the Air Training Corps and reached the rank of Flight Lieutenant. He retired from active participation with the A.T.C. in 1968 and was invited to a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace. He still retains his interest in the A.T.C. and is a civilian member of the management committee.

Miss I. WEST

After 26 years' service in the electricity supply industry, Miss Ida West retired from her job as confidential secretary a few weeks ago.

Miss West began her career with us when she worked for Mr. A. D. Hegan, the former Electrical

Engineer to Crewe Corporation Electricity Dept.

In recognition of her long and loyal service, colleagues at Macon Way, Crewe, presented her with a carriage clock and a coffee set, and members of the typing pool gave a Wedgewood bowl. Former District Manager, Mr. J. A. Winchester gave a silver flower vase. The presentations were made by Mr. N. Walsh (District Commercial Engineer).

Miss West will no doubt still be a busy woman in her retirement as she is an active member of the Wistaston Townswomen's Guild and St. Michael's Church.

Mr. G. A. DAVIES and Mr. L. PEERS

There was a double departure from New Crane Street, Chester recently when two chargehands from our Dee Valley District joined the ranks of the retired.

Mr. George A. Davies, a chargehand linesman had served the industry for 38 years. A former miner, George joined the North Wales Power Company in 1932. He moved to Chester eleven years later and

Colleagues at Crewe with Miss Ida West, second from left.





Mr. R. H. Comyn (*Production Engineer, Dee Valley*), *centre left*, hands over parting gifts to **Mr. Davies**, *centre*, and **Mr. Peers**, *centre right*.

got a job with the Chester Corporation Electricity Department in the overhead line section.

He is happily married and has a son and two married daughters. In his younger days, George was a keen footballer, playing trial matches as a goal-keeper for the Welsh Amateur International team and for Wrexham A.F.C. His present pastime is gardening, not being content with his own home garden, he has two allotments!

Len Peers, a chargehand in the transport section, first joined Chester Corporation in 1923, but after a couple of years, he left for another job. Six years later he came back to the electricity industry and in 1934 returned to Chester to work in the overhead lines section of the Corporation Electricity Dept.

During the last war, Len served in the Royal Marines in the Mediterranean area. He is married and for the first few weeks of his retirements, he intends to have a good rest.

Mr. H. PARK

A former Mersey Power Company and Mid Cheshire Electricity Supply Company man, Mr.

Harry Park, retired recently from his job at Head Office as senior assistant engineer (transport).

In his retirement, Harry will be devoting much of his time to his many hobbies and interests which include climbing, industrial archeology and gardening. He won't of course forget the maintenance of his deisel-engined car, now almost in the vintage class, and well known in most of the transport depots throughout the Board's area.

In addition to an informal gathering at Head Office when colleagues said their goodbyes, a number of his friends joined him at a Bersham hotel where a farewell presentation was made . . . and a good night was had by one and all.

Mr. W. H. WILLIAMS

A lifetime of service with the electricity supply industry on Anglesey came to an end a short time ago when Mr. William Hugh Williams retired.

He began his apprenticeship as an electrician with the former Holyhead Undertaking in 1928 and later became an installation inspector. He then worked as a senior shop assistant before gaining the appoint-

A happy group at Head Office on the occasion of the retirement of Mr. Park, centre.





Just a few of his friends from South Lancashire District Office at Warrington gather to say their goodbyes to Mr. Booth, *centre right*, as he gives a parting handshake to Mr. Dodd.

ment as assistant consumers' engineer, taking charge of the sub-District office at Menai Bridge. In 1965, he went to work in the Commercial section at the Llangefni District Office.

William's many friends on the island wish him a long, happy and healthy retirement.

Mr. H. BOOTH

Senior storekeeper at Warrington, Mr. Harry Booth retired recently after completing 21 years' service in the electricity supply industry.

Harry joined the Board as a clerk in the stores accounts section at our former Area 2 office at Eversley after many years' storekeeping experience with the Admiralty.

Later he became a stock checker and was promoted as senior storekeeper in 1959.

On behalf of his many friends in the South Lancashire District, he was presented with a clock, a toaster, a kettle and a cheque by Mr. G. H. Dodd (*District Administrative Officer*).

A keen musician, Harry plays first cornet for Warrington Silver Band, and obviously looks for-

ward to many years enjoying this absorbing hobby, as he has just acquired a new uniform!

Mr. T. TOTTY

A few weeks ago, colleagues at New Crane Street Chester gathered to say their farewells to Mr. Thomas Totty who was retiring from his work as a fitter.

His first job on leaving school was a youngsters dream—salmon net fishing in the River Dee. After a few years of this, Thomas went to work for the Chester Northgate Brewery.

It was in 1937 that he joined the Chester Corporation Electricity Department, and except for a short spell with Callenders Cables and the North West Construction Company, he has been with us ever since.

During the war years, Thomas was an electrician with R.A.F. Bomber Command, and on his return to civilian life in 1945, he was employed on the equipping and maintenance of the substations in and around Chester. In recent years, Thomas has worked in the fitting shop.

In the New Crane Street workshops, colleagues gather to give a good send-off to Mr. Totty, *centre left*, as he receives parting gifts from Mr. Stan Wright (*foreman*).



SHE'S NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU?



You've never seen her before,
after all.

She was married to a
guy in your line of business.
But that's not your business,
is it?

We hope to God you prove us
wrong. Because it's everybody's
business to be human.

Especially when someone's in
trouble. Like the woman in our
picture. Her husband died
suddenly, left her with two little
boys, and a gap of £3 a week
between income and costs.

That's where total strangers
stepped in. They'd never met
her, and they never will. But
they'd had enough spark of
humanity to write off a little of
their own income to EEIBA.

We hope you'll help us too.
To help people who are nothing
to do with you.

Remember, one day you may need some total strangers too.

Just pick up the telephone and call the Welfare Department at Head Office and ask for a salary deduction slip. Do it now—it's quite straightforward. Ten-pence a month is such a small amount and if it is automatically deducted from your salary it wouldn't break you, but it would certainly help to build up someone who would regard you as a good friend.



The Electrical & Electronics Industries Benevolent Association