

CONTACT

Manweb's monthly newspaper
for staff and their families.

MID MERSEY
LIVERPOOL
NORTH MERSEY
DEE VALLEY
HEAD OFFICE
OSWESTRY
GWYNEDD
ABERYSTWYTH
NORTH WIRRAL
CLWYD
MID CHESHIRE

No. 3

SEPTEMBER 1988

Research will enable Manweb to improve services

CUSTOMERS QUIZZED FOR MORI POLL

by Jackie Unsworth

MANWEB has been out on the streets asking customers what they think of the service provided. An opinion poll has been carried out on behalf of the Board by MORI—Market and Opinion Research International—to discover people's attitudes towards Manweb and its operations.

Manweb Chairman Bryan Weston said: "In a large organisation like ours, where most senior people have spent the majority of their working life in the industry, there is a natural inclination to assume we know what customers want from us and how best we can serve them.

"This is often not the case. The only accurate way to find out what customers want and think is to ask them.

"A well-planned research study can highlight areas of our service where customers are most dissatisfied and which require attention.

MORI carried out the opinion poll with different customer

groups in Liverpool and Caernarfon.

The people who took part were quizzed about such things as reliability of supply, Manweb's efficiency, prices, helpfulness of staff, and their experience of shops.

They were also asked about after-sales service, range of

goods, bill paying and privatisation.

The findings of the opinion poll are now being analysed by MORI experts, who will report back to Manweb.

MORI Director Stewart Lewis said: "Privatisation has put customer service issues into sharper focus than ever before, and MORI has carried out major studies of customer opinion for several Boards.

Action

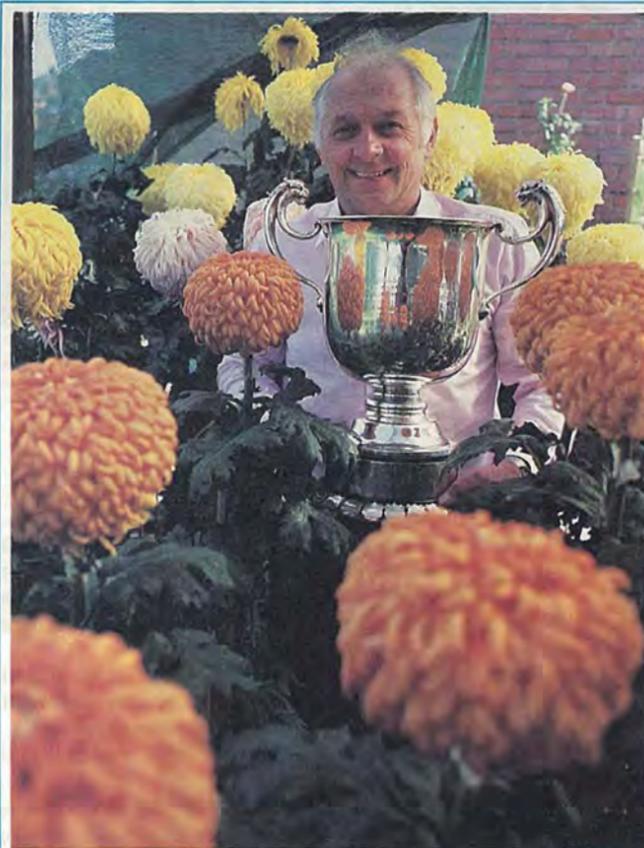
"These perceptions, attitudes, feelings and impressions are a central part of a Board's relationship—both now and in the future—with its customers. Our clients have used research to help set priorities, institute action plans and focus communication programmes.

"A good reputation makes customers more likely to purchase products, encourage others to deal with or work for the organisation, listen sympathetically to its point of view—and buy shares in it."

Satisfied

● The Mori poll prompted one local newspaper to carry out its own mini survey of Manweb's customers in Caernarfon.

A reporter from the *Caernarfon Herald* went out onto the streets to question electricity users—and their replies brought good news for Manweb. Virtually everyone quizzed said they were perfectly satisfied with the service provided.



Flower power!

BLOOMIN' marvellous! That's how Manweb's chrysanthemum king Ken McDean is feeling following his recent success in the Southport Flower Show.

The 49-year-old Mid-Cheshire Electrical Fitter, who is pictured among his prize blooms, achieved one of his greatest ambitions when he won the Show's Premier Award for his fantastic flowers.

Ken, who is based at the Northwich Fitting Shop, said: "I entered six classes and managed to take one second and five first prizes, including the major class for chrysanthemums. I was absolutely thrilled."

A member of Northwich & District Chrysanthemum Society, Ken has been growing beautiful blooms for 15 years, specialising in the large, early flowering varieties.

Beautiful

He said: "My brother used to grow chrysanthemums, and brought my wife a beautiful vase of them. I thought they were lovely and decided to have a go at growing some myself. I've never looked back and now I spend most of my spare time looking after my plants."

The back garden of Ken's home in Winsford is a sea of colour, with more than 300 chrysanthemum plants being carefully cultivated for flower shows up and down the country.

In the last three years he has entered 16 exhibits in shows, taking 15 firsts and one second prize.

He said: "It involves a lot of hard work and dedication, but for me it is well worth the effort."



Cliff's
Royal date

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John picks
up points

PAGE 4



Dr Jim
fixes it

PAGE 12



Junior
ice champ

PAGE 5

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Clocking off

OLIVE Jones, a Clerk in Meter Modernisation at North Mersey District, has taken early retirement after 20 years' service with Manweb.

Affectionately nicknamed Jonesy by her workmates, Olive, 57, was a founder member of the North Mersey Sports and Social Club, and spent much of her spare time helping behind the bar.

Her hobbies include cookery, and according to her colleagues, Olive's sponge cakes are "the best in the business".

Olive is pictured with District Manager Jim McLennan, who presented her with a number of gifts, including a food mixer.



A bumper send-off

MORE than 100 Manweb staff turned up at a farewell party to mark the retirement of popular North Mersey Engineering Foreman Jack Pownall.

Father-of-two Jack joined Manweb in 1963 as a Fitter in Southport, and within a short time was promoted to Foreman. When the Districts amalgamated, he transferred to jointing as Engineering Foreman for the Maghull and Aintree areas, then Kirkby, and eventually returned to Southport, where he remained up to his retirement.

In his spare time Jack, whose son Eric is a Southport Meter Reader, is the licensee of a Church Social Club in Birkdale, where his retirement party was held.

He is also a keen traveller, having visited such far-flung countries as Russia, and is planning a trip to South Africa to visit friends in the near future.

Jack, who was presented with a stereo tape deck, is pictured shaking hands with District Manager Jim McLennan, watched by some of his colleagues.



Early retirement for Tom at the end of an era with Manweb

IT was the end of an era when staff at Head Office said goodbye to Project Engineer Tom Bishop recently. Tom, who took early retirement, had worked for Manweb since the early 1970s when he transferred from the CEGB. A keen traveller in his spare time, Tom, who for a spell before joining Manweb worked for the power supply industry in Canada, is married with one daughter. He is pictured (sixth from the left) shaking hands with Mains Manager Stan Roberts, who presented him with a cheque.



A double farewell

STAFF at Head Office gathered in the Printing Section for a double farewell presentation to two composer/operators.

Admin Assistant Pat Byrne is pictured presenting gifts of jewellery on behalf of colleagues to Liz Wardle (centre) and Janet Jordan.

Liz, who joined Manweb in 1969, originally as a typist, has left to start a new life in Florida. She is planning to marry an American chef she met while on holiday there.

Janet, who has worked for Manweb since 1980, has transferred to North Mersey District as a Clerk in Customer Accounts.



End of term for teacher John

SCHOOL'S out for John Seymour, Senior Electrical Instructor at Hoylake Training Centre, which he helped to set up 32 years ago.

John, who is pictured receiving a painting of a Welsh scene from Training Centre Manager Alex Smitton, has taken early retirement after a total of 36 years' service with Manweb.

A keen badminton player and walker, John, 59, started his career with Manweb as a contracting electrician after serving his apprenticeship with his father's electrical contracting business.

He completed his National Service with the RAF, and today still has an interest in aeroplanes—the model variety!

A party to mark his retirement was held at Hoylake Training Centre, where it is estimated he has been involved in the training of up to 3,500 people over the years. John was also presented with a barometer and his wife Phyllis received a bouquet.

Transport boss puts the brakes on

TRANSPORT Manager Jack Hill has put the brakes on his career with Manweb and taken early retirement. Colleagues gathered at Head Office on August 26 to wish Jack, who joined the industry over 40 years ago, all the best, as Resource Engineering Manager John Powell presented him with gifts including a claret jug, matching glasses and a bottle of vintage wine.

Jack, 64, served with the Army in India during the Second World War, involved with jeep transport. In 1947 he joined the Transport Department of the Mersey Power and Mid Cheshire Electric Company.

Soon after nationalisation he was appointed Transport Officer, Area 2, and a year later moved to a similar post in Area 1. In 1977 he became Senior Engineer (Transport) at Head Office, later moving up to Principal Engineer (Transport) and eventually Transport Manager.

In his retirement, Jack, who enjoys training gun dogs, is expected to spend more time out and about with his two pet Golden Retrievers.



Here's to the future!

CHEERS! Liverpool District Office Manager Norman Mitchell and his wife Joan celebrate his early retirement with a glass of wine.

Norman's career with the electricity supply industry began in 1949, two years after completing his war service with the RAF. He initially worked in Consumer Records at Hatton Garden, later moving to Engineering Ordering and then Secretarial, before transferring to Lister Drive in 1964 as District Senior Clerk.

Norman was well thought of by his colleagues, and a large number, including many retired employees, attended his farewell get-together at Lister Drive.

Among the many gifts he received was a Workmate, drill and accessory set, a lawnmower and a garden lounger. Making the presentation, District Manager Gerry Haughan paid tribute to Norman's "honesty and steadfastness" in all he did.

The Bard signs off

THE "Bard of Oswestry", Commercial Foreman Henry Blackwell, has hung up his notebook and pen and retired after more than 39 years' service with the electricity supply industry.

Henry, who earned his nickname because of his ability to write suitable prose for any occasion, is pictured (right) with his wife, receiving gifts from Oswestry Installation Manager Phil Jones. Colleagues past and present gathered at the farewell party to wish him well in the future.



Kevan's new job

DEE Valley Assistant District Manager Kevan Dufty has left to take up a new post with Norweb.

Kevan, who came to Manweb in January this year on secondment from the Electricity Council, has been appointed Assistant Secretary with Norweb.

Married with two children, Kevan, who lives in Stockport, joined the Electricity Council in 1979 and before secondment to Manweb was the District Industrial Officer for the Merseyside, North Wales and North Western Area.

Friends spring surprise party

WHAT a picture! That must have been Clwyd Commercial Foreman Arfon Thomas's face when 80 friends and colleagues gathered at a surprise farewell party to mark his retirement.

Arfon, who was invited along to a Conwy restaurant, where his workmates were waiting, is pictured fifth from the left receiving a painting from Installation Engineer Roy Haley.

Based at Llandudno Junction, Arfon joined Manweb in 1956 after serving with the RAF and also working for a private contractor. He worked as a Contracting Electrician, Service Electrician, Installation Inspector and Chargehand before being appointed Foreman in 1983.

In his retirement, Arfon plans to keep himself busy running his five-acre smallholding, which has around 50 sheep. He is also involved with the Welsh Presbyterian Chapel in his village.



Linesman gets special award

A QUICK-THINKING Manweb linesman who saved the life of a young boy has received a special award. Dee Valley's Alan Crump, 28, who is also a Special Constable, has been awarded the Chief Constable's Commendation for Good Duty following an incident at the Wrexham Lager Gala Day at Plas Coch in June.

Alan, who lives in New Broughton, was recommended for the award by a woman who witnessed his lifesaving act. In a letter to Wrexham police, the woman, Mrs J. Chaloner, from Pentre Broughton, said she was waiting to go into the Fun House and was watching children sliding down a chute to land on a rubber mattress.

It was then that she witnessed the "quick-thinking and alertness" of Special Constable Crump.

A boy aged around ten had come down the chute with a lollipop in his mouth, and the impact at the bottom had caused him to swallow it whole.

Alan Crump acted immediately and managed to dislodge the lollipop stuck in the boy's throat, and the youngster made a quick recovery.

"The officer walked away from the scene without anyone really knowing what had gone on," said Mrs Chaloner, a nurse.

"If he had not been on the spot and noticed what had happened, I dread to think of the outcome for that young child. With the noise from the fair and the crowds milling around, the child could have choked to death unnoticed."

Alan, who is married, joined Manweb in 1978, starting his career as a Labourer. He became a Special Constable in 1979, and is described by his Commandant as a "credit to the service".

A Royal date for Councillor Cliff

IT'S not every day you get to rub shoulders with the Queen and Prime Minister, but that's just what happened to Queensferry Storekeeper Cliff Shone recently.

Cliff, a member of Alyn and Deeside District Council, and his wife Megan were invited to Buckingham Palace to attend a Royal Garden Party. And although they didn't actually have the honour of meeting Her Majesty, the couple did manage to have brief conversations with Mrs Thatcher and husband Denis, and with ex-Lord High Chancellor, Lord Hailsham.

Marvellous

Former Mayor Cliff, who is also a past Chairman of Hope Community Council, has worked at Queensferry Stores for almost 20 years. His wife is the Sister in Charge of the Operating Theatre at Grosvenor Nuffield Hospital, Chester.

Cliff said: "It was a marvellous afternoon which we will never forget. We enjoyed every minute."

Queen

The couple, pictured outside the Palace gates, were among 6,000 civic guests at the garden party, which went on for three hours. Among the royals who attended were the Queen, Duke of Edinburgh, Duke and Duchess of Kent, and Princess Alexandra and Mr Angus Ogilvy.

After passing through Buckingham Palace, the Shones joined the other guests on the lawns for tea, with gateaux and ice cream on royal china, of course!





On the trail of treasure

JUST the ticket! Energy Marketing Manager Bryan Ogden (centre) draws the names of ten lucky winners to take part in the Ambassador Club's vintage car "Treasure Trail".

To qualify for the draw, staff had to submit leads in three key areas—storage heaters, Economy 7 conversions and insulation.

The prize was an all-expenses-paid trip to Stafford to compete in a chauffeur driven vintage car treasure hunt. This was held on September 17 and the full story will be in next month's *Contact*.

Also pictured during the draw are Ambassador Club Administrators Gordon Starkey and Mary Goldon.

Give us a call

WHAT'S new in your district or department? Have you a view you'd like to air, or an idea for a story? Then why not let *Contact* know?

Write, phone or come to talk to *Contact* Editor Jackie Unsworth in Room GE26, Head Office, ext. 2090, or get in touch with one of the District *Contact* reps. They are as follows:

North Mersey: Edna Courtney, ext. 21677, **Liverpool:** Teresa Kelly, ext. 2117, **Mid-Mersey:** Ena Harding, ext. 2231, **Dee Valley:** Steve Parry, ext. 2112, **North Wirral:** Mike Townson, ext. 2202, **Mid-Cheshire:** Pat O'Neill, ext. 2111, **Clwyd:** Rod Taylor, ext. 2118, **Gwynedd:** Malcolm Donaldson, ext. 2250, **Oswestry:** Sid Warburton, ext. 2230, **Aberystwyth:** Keith Jones, ext. 2202, **Hoyle Training Centre:** Pauline Lewis, ext. 251.



LIVERPOOL District Craftsman Electrician John Hunt was the 50,000 points winner in the Ambassador Club's August draw.

John, who is pictured (right) receiving his giant "cheque" from District Manager Gerry Haughan and Ambassador Club Liaison Officer Calum Kennedy (centre), submitted leads to the value of just under £3,900. To date he has earned 26,980 points.

Obituary

IT is with sadness that *Contact* reports the death of former Manweb bricklayer Bill Edge.

Bill, who was based at the old North Wirral District office in Craven Street, Birkenhead, up to his retirement nearly 16 years ago, died in hospital in New Zealand on August 17 at the age of 80.

He and Mrs Edge had emigrated in 1976 to join their daughter and son-in-law, Joan and Graham Hordern, in Auckland. The family moved further north three years ago to run a motel in New Zealand's Bay of Islands.

Bill worked for Manweb for ten years, and before emigrating lived in Mold. In a letter to *Contact*, his daughter Joan said: "My parents really enjoyed a happy retirement here in a much warmer climate."

"My father always enjoyed reading the Manweb newspaper. Thank you for sending it to him."

Customer Charter

MANWEB came up to scratch in most of the areas set out in the Customer Charter during July.

MANWEB carried out 30,839 jobs and failed to reach the standard set out on just 36 occasions.

Of these, 33 were for failing to keep appointments to read or empty meters (15 down to one man on a single day in the first week of the Charter's operation), two were for final meter reading or emptying, and one was for a wiring inspection.

The Charter, which was launched on July 1, guarantees seven key services. Customers will receive £10 vouchers if these services fail to meet the declared standards.

During the first month, Man-

LJCC Open Meetings

A NUMBER of LJCC Open Meetings have been arranged during the coming months. The are as follows:

October 7—Dee Valley, Bryn Howell Hotel, Llangollen.
 October 20—Liverpool, Dovetail Towers, Liverpool, and North Mersey (Southport), Mount Pleasant Hotel, Southport, October 21—Oswestry, The Pedigree, Shrewsbury Road, Oswestry, November 11—Clwyd, Kimmel Manor, Abergele, and Mid-Mersey, Crest Hotel, Wood Lane, Runcorn.

Blindness. It's never cost less to spread so much sight.

FOR JUST £1.00 PER WEEK,



you could provide books in Braille for libraries.

FOR £1.20 PER WEEK,



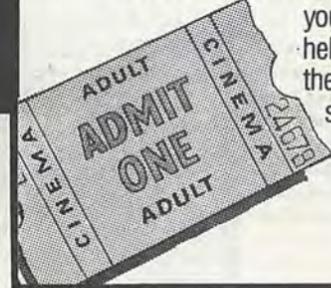
you can help towards three months upkeep of a guide dog.

FOR £1.50 PER WEEK,



you can save the sight of more than 50 African people every year.

FOR £2.20 PER WEEK,



you can help towards the special schooling of a blind child.

With the new Government Payroll Giving Scheme, now you can let the tax man make a greater contribution.

If you're an employee, you can give up to £20 per month of your earnings to charity, tax free, so long as you make your donation at source. For example, for every £1 you give, you pay only 75p, the tax man contributes the remainder and BLINDCARE receives the full value of your donation – at no extra cost to yourself. The table gives you some examples of the breakdown of the savings.

To help you make your donation benefit the world-wide scope of work for the blind, the major Charities in the field have come together under the name BLINDCARE.

YOU GIVE	COSTS YOU	TAX PAYS	BLINDCARE RECEIVES
50p/week	38p/week	12p/week	50p/week
£1/week	75p/week	25p/week	£1/week
£5/month	£3.75/month	£1.25/month	£5/month
£10/month	£7.50/month	£2.50/month	£10/month
£20/month	£15/month	£5/month	£20/month

Thanks to the work of pioneering organisations like the International Glaucoma Association and the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind, restoring

the gift of sight is an everyday occurrence in developing Countries.

Whilst here in Britain, the Royal National Institute for the Blind, the Royal National College for the Blind, the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, Fight for Sight, the London Association for the Blind, the Royal London and the Midland Societies provide so many lifelines like education, counselling, rehabilitation, mobility, social clubs, accommodation and research.

Surely £1 per week is not much to set aside for so much vital work. Especially now your contribution goes so much further. And if you're an employer who hasn't adopted the scheme, contact us today for details.

See your way to help – please



BLINDCARE

P.O. Box 1000, Haywards Heath, W.Sussex RH16 3XZ
 Tel: 0444 412424 (ext.129 & 136)

Camera contest is sure to click

CAMERAS at the ready! Entries are now invited for Contact's annual photographic competition.

Super cash prizes are waiting to be won by snap-happy Manweb staff, retired employees and their families. The awards are as follows:

BEST PICTURE from the whole entry £30

COLOUR PRINTS

Scenes only Best Picture £25
Runner-up £15

Any other subject

Best Picture £25
Runner-up £15

TRANSPARENCIES

Any subject Best Picture £25
Runner-up £15

BLACK AND WHITE

Best Picture £15

RULES

1. Entry is free, but is restricted to Manweb staff, retired employees and their immediate families.

2. List your entries with titles and classes entered, together with your full name and home or office address, on a piece of paper, and enclose this with your pictures. Failure to do this could mean disqualification. Do not write on the back of your pictures.

3. Up to five entries per person in any one class will be allowed.

4. Each entry must be the original work and copyright property of the person submitting it.

5. All entries must have been photographed since April 1987.

6. The Editor reserves the right to reproduce any prize-winning pictures without a fee being paid.

7. The competition will be judged by an independent panel, and their decision is final.

8. All entries must be received by Friday, November 4, 1988.

9. Entries should be sent to: The Editor, Contact, Room GE26, Manweb, Sealand Road, Chester CH1 4LR. Please mark your envelope or package "Photographic Competition" in the top left-hand corner.

Steven skates to success Bladerunner!

by Jackie Unsworth

TEENAGER Steven Cousins has to get his skates on to keep up with his hectic lifestyle. Every day the schoolboy whizz-kid is up at 5 a.m. for a spin on the ice at the Deeside rink. After lunch he returns for another few hours' intensive training, and when he isn't cutting a dash on the ice he's keeping fit by pumping iron.

With such dedication, it's hardly surprising that 16-year-old Steven—son of Liverpool District Installation Manager Dave Cousins—is making his mark on the ice skating world.

Earlier this month the young blade won the British Junior title, held at Lee Valley, London, and sponsored by Skate Electric. And on October 4 he'll be competing in the Skate Electric UK International contest at Richmond Ice Rink, London.

Olympic

The International event will be Steven's first attempt at a Senior competition, and in order to take part he is having to break off from a training trip to Moscow.

Steven flew out to Russia on September 8 for what should have been a six week stay, with sponsorship from the Welsh Sports Council and a Sandbach electrical firm, to train under former Olympic Champion Irina Rodnina.

Experience

Dave Cousins said: "He was chosen to skate in the International competition while in Russia, which is marvellous, but because he has to come home early, it means I have to find the money for his flight.

"I'm very proud of Steven... and broke!"

The trip to Moscow should give Steven valuable experience. After all, who better to learn from than Russia's top class skaters?



Cutting a dash... Ice champ Steven Cousins.

When he returns home, the youngster who nurtures a dream of competing in the Olympics will have some big decisions to make about his future—whether to return to Deeside High School to gain further qualifications or find a job.

His dad said: "Steven has been skating since he was six,

and his real ambition is to be the best in the world.

"At the end of November he's off to Yugoslavia for the World Junior Championships, and we've got our fingers crossed that he'll be selected for the European Skate Electric Championships in January. That's enough for the time being!"

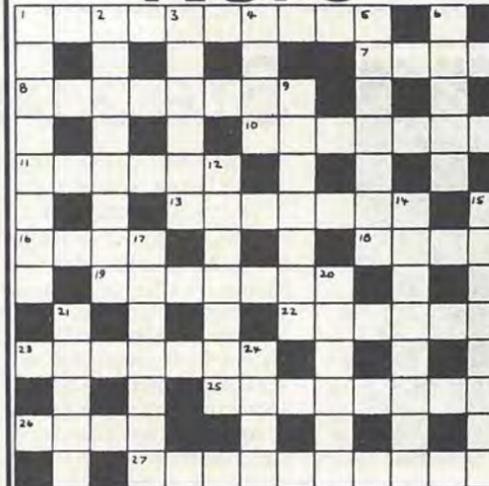
Long Service

CONGRATULATIONS to the following Manweb employees who have completed 20 or 30 years' service in the electricity supply industry during August.

30 YEARS: Dee Valley—Peter Elphee (Commercial Foreman at New Crane Street), Eifion Jones (Commercial Foreman at Legacy).

20 YEARS: Head Office — Rob Fallowfield (Principal Assistant, Costs); Liverpool—Brian Wignall (Meter Operative), Paul Glover (Admin Assistant, General Services); Gwynedd—Ifor Jones (Llangefni Shop Manager); Aberystwyth—Irene Morris (Energy Sales Assistant).

Crossword No. 3



Across
1 Go out and take a girl on the river (5,5). 7 Acknowledge a victory can bring pain (4). 8 Poet basking on a sunny beach? (8). 10 Chekhov work taking flight (7). 11 Time for refreshment on the side (6). 13 Princess leaving the board members to become clergymen (7). 16 Take off in the garden (4). 18 Guy's girl just isn't real! (4). 19 Dull-looking church offering an escape from France (7). 22 Navy white (6). 23 Scatter the wrong set when the beer comes round (7). 25 One might feel the bleating terribly (8). 26 Countenance one going among the people (4). 27 Flow of warmth from America (4, 6).

Down
1 It could make one a tenant of a tenant (8). 2 Need solo turn be so much more free? (8). 3 Over there. Rodney—get moving! (6). 4 Admits being one of the haves (4). 5 Drawn to pull up behind a witch (7). 6 Cast a blight? (5). 9 Wave from a bewildered guest about to follow (7). 12 The head's above such an adornment (7). 14 Bias Cleo towards mixing with people (8). 15 Battle to make an orange into an apple (8). 17 Wiping away a light covering (7). 20 Lady's champion having a royal time (6). 21 Do hard work of a wicked character (5). 24 Stray if going beyond West Africa (4).

Solutions on Page 12



Dawn Hanrahan, Saleswoman at Manweb's Warrington shop, demonstrates Akai's smart new midi hi-fi system.

Tune in to this

TUNE in to Akai's smart new midi hi-fi system now on sale at the larger Manweb shops.

The M452 system is the very latest model and sells at £299.95, but is available to Manweb employees and retired staff for just £239.95.

Its main features are:

- * Matrix Surround Sound System.
- * Full Featured Infra-Red Remote Control.
- * 2 x 25 Watts (DIN) Power Output.
- * Five Band Graphic Equaliser.
- * Semi-Automatic Turntable.
- * Twin Cassette Deck with High Speed Dubbing and Dolby B NR.
- * Motor Driven Volume Control via Remote Control.
- * Quartz Synthesised Tuner with 16 Pre-Sets.
- * Two Bass Reflex Main Speakers and Two Surround Speakers.

A separate programmable compact disc player, which can be controlled by the M452 system's remote control, is also available. Staff price £119.95.

Congratulations

EEIBA prizewinners

NORMAN Clarke, former Production Engineer at Dee Valley District, was the £300 prizewinner in the EEIBA's August draw, with the lucky number 100. The other winners were as follows:

£200—P. A. Corfield, Oswestry (672); £150—S. Airey, retired (1910); £100—I. G. Matthewson, Head Office (396); £75—O. Silverston, retired (2264); £50—K. V. Davies, Liverpool (1197); £50—J. O. O'Rourke, Mid-Cheshire (817); £50—D. P. Keddie, Dee Valley (765); £50—L. Price, Oswestry (1277); £50—M. Parkinson, retired (1944); £25—E. Gee, Retired (1498); £25—E. Lunt, Head Office (19); £25—B. V. Wooster, Head Office (454); £25—D. J. Parry, Dee Valley (347); £25—F. Wilding, retired (18).

More than 300 extra members have joined the Prize Draw Club as a result of a recent "recruitment" campaign, when leaflets were sent out with the August pay slips. This means the total prize money each month has now been increased to £1,350.

Anyone else wishing to join the scheme should contact Cathy (Welfare 2034) or Chris (Financial Accounts 2509).

Steve's nappy news

CONGRATULATIONS on the birth of a baby girl, who weighed in at 4 lb. 12 ozs. on August 17, to Dee Valley Admin Assistant Steve Parry and his wife Sandra, an ex-Manweb employee.



Easy does it!

THIS was the tense moment as a pylon tower was gently lowered onto its base by a massive crane. The team of Manweb linesmen and engineers on site at the Sandycroft Industrial Estate, Queensferry, held their breath as the huge tower was inched into place.

The tower had been hoisted into the air to enable a 30 ft extension to be installed at its base.

Brian Weardon, North Wirral's Resource Manager, Transmission Section, explained: "This pylon was originally built with a 20 ft extension at its base which, because of factory developments on the site, had to be replaced with a 30 ft section. Without this, the power lines would be too close to the new buildings.

"It was a very delicate operation, made more complicated because the earthwire on the tower was also carrying an optical fibre communications cable. We had to be extremely careful not to damage this when raising the tower and replacing it.

"However, it all went very smoothly, even though it was a very long, slow job."

According to Brian, this was the first time ever that a tower had been raised with a "wrapped on" fibre optic cable on the earthwire.

He said: "I think the only similar operation to be carried out was in New Zealand, where a pole with an optical fibre wrapped conductor was moved a few feet."

The photo of the Gower AB30 pylon being lowered onto its base was taken during a brief "stolen" moment by one of the Transmission Section's longest serving linesmen, Derek Oldham.

Praise for Dee valley team whose technical ability Manweb's new C Centre gets the hi-tech seal of ap

"ANY original doubts that were voiced about Dee Valley's technical capability when we originally tendered for this job earlier this year must now be dispelled. We believe Manweb has an electrical installation within the computer centre which is of the highest standard and we have every confidence in its reliability for the years ahead."

That's strong stuff indeed from Keith Murray, who has been resident Engineer in charge of the contract Dee Valley won in January and recently completed on September 24. But it's a comment he can be justified in making since the critics who at first doubted the District's capability have been proved wrong. And it's also backed up by Fairclough's, the firm in charge of construction: "We are really pleased with the way the work has been carried out. It's a top class job," said Colin Quigley, the firm's Regional Chief Contracts Manager.

Nine months ago Dee Valley did a manpower budget for the District Manager Bob Hodson and Installations Services Manager Derek Holman backed the District's tender for the contract which they believed to be in the region of £300,000 to £400,000.

Keith takes up the story: "We did a manpower budget for the contract by assuming the material and labour were split on various sections—lighting, switchgear and high voltage.

"We knew we had sufficient manpower within the District and could always utilise manpower

from other districts if necessary.

"Having confirmed we had the resources to tackle the job we were interviewed by Fairclough and given details of the contract preliminaries.

"Four weeks later, we received drawings and technical specifications at a meeting with John Wordley, the Electrical Consultant from Wright Design and Management, and immediately started checking and amending specifications and formulating our tender.

Flexibility

"Two weeks after that our tender was complete and accepted at £449,000.

"We then prepared working drawings with the help of the Head Office Drawing Office, a detailed programme and a method statement.

"The specification on all items of plant and equipment was checked and finalised and placed on order. Work started on site in early January with one engineer, one foreman and eight electricians.

"At its peak, the workload required 22 electricians but during completion only three were required for final commissioning work.

"A high degree of flexibility was also required especially since we had to cope with an extra 80 man-weeks of work with no extension of the contract period."

The contract wasn't without its

difficulties, particularly since it was the largest electrical installation that Dee Valley had undertaken, and with no previous experience of jobs of this nature.

Although the District is part of Manweb, it didn't have any preferential treatment but had to manage with more or less the same facilities as any other outside contractor working at Head Office.

Insufficient on-site accommodation meant working in cramped and draughty Portacabins, and there were no separate drawing office facilities within the Commercial Department.

"The difficulties were compounded by the fact that we had no previous experience of computer installations and we, as contractors, were responsible for ensuring all the specifications were correct.

"Also, computer installation terminology was completely new to us! But we nevertheless coped with the whole remit of the contract which involved all the electrical services to the computer equipment, general lighting and power, uninterruptible power supplies, stand-by generator system and the electrical installation on three plant rooms—heating, chilling and air-handling.

"In addition, we dealt with the specialised 400 Hz computer wiring, the installation of fibre-optic cables for telecommunications purposes and also put in the basic systems for fire alarms,



Keith Murray (left) and John Wordley checking the power supplies from the power distribution unit—a system which John designed and Dee Valley District installed.

On the Wire



You're pulling my leg

WHILE testing in the centre of Liverpool a new radar device which can detect electricity cables, gas and water pipes underground, one of our engineers was approached by a man who asked what he was doing.

Curious

Our man, who was holding a curious looking box of electronics with aerials sticking out,

thought he would have a bit of fun. "It's a new type of street vacuum cleaner," he said.

"Gerroff! Yer havin' me on. Come on, what's it really for?" replied the sceptical Scouser.

Our man came clean. "It's a radar device to tell us where cables and pipes are underground without digging up the road."

The enquirer snorted. "Now

yer really havin' me on," he said, and stalked off...

* * *

THE following howler was spotted in the *Electratech Staff Guide*. "From the beginning of October, 1988, through to the end of the year, 1¼ million leaflets will be distributed to every household in the Manweb area." Think about it...



Step into

MY thanks to Meter Reader/Collector Street Depot, Chester, for this picture.

The picture left, with its parlour not, as you may first imagine, a view of the hotel. Those with long memories will remember Manweb's Chester shop circa 1930.

The photo appeared in the 13th issue of the *Electrician*, accompanied by the following text: "Electricity is supplied by the Chester District Council at a net rateable value plus 5d per unit and an Industrial tariff £4.10s per kw per annum."

As you can see from the present-day picture, still. Apart from the balconies, very little has changed.

clinched a major contract computer experts' approval

KEITH MURRAY, Dee Valley Installation Engineer, talks to GAYNOR KENYON, following the completion of the District's electrical installation contract for the new Computer Centre at Head Office

security, internal telephones and VDU networks.

"We at Dee Valley now have the technical expertise on tap to enable us to tender for any future computer installation work.

"In fact, Arwel Lloyd, the Installation Engineer at Dee Valley, and I have been approached by a Chester financial firm to sort out a computer project for them and this is exactly the sort of area we will be able to get into.

"We have proved that we are capable of undertaking very large and complex contracts and have gained experience in site management, planning and control, contractual matters, preparation of extremely complex and co-ordinated drawings and created working techniques that will always stand us in good stead for any future contracts."

Targets

And what has Manweb got out of it? "An A1 installation at a very competitive price," said Keith.

The completion of the electrical installation has cleared the way for IBM to start work on the final connections of linking the computers to the power supply.

And everything is on target for the building to be officially handed over to Manweb on 10 October when the furniture and equipment will be moved in.

If all goes according to plan, the building will become fully operational before the end of the year.



Above: Flashback to the early days and the installation of the underfloor data cabling.

Below: Almost there! Civil Engineering and Building Manager Harry Foreman (left) and Fairclough Site Manager Jim Purcell outside the nearly complete computer centre.



Underground cable layers set a record for Manweb

MANWEB may have set a record when more than 2,000 metres of underground cable were recently installed at Chester in just three days.

A mole-plough, normally used for laying plastic pipe drains in agricultural land, was used to install the 11kv three-core power cable on the Sealand Nurseries site near Head Office.

The cable and marker tape was fed through the hollow plough blade through to the bottom of a one metre-deep slit in the ground.

Powerful

To overcome the resistance of the soil, a powerful tracked pulling vehicle was needed, and a similar vehicle was also used in tandem to tow a cable drum trailer.

Cables and Lines Manager Tom Garmory, who organised the equipment with the contractors, Cuthbertsons of Biggar, Scotland, said: "More than 2,000 metres of 11 kv cable installed in three days is a bit

mind-boggling, but our recent trials produced just that result.

"The type of equipment we needed has occasionally been used for cable laying across the North American and Continental plains, but opportunities in the British Isles do not often present themselves.

Quickly

"The 11 kv connection required between Sealand Nurseries and Engineer Park, Sandycroft, was identified as an ideal opportunity to lay the power cable quickly and cheaply. Arrangements were made by Steve Macauley in the Secretarial Department to obtain the necessary Wayleaves."



● Ploughing into their work . . . The convoy of tracked vehicles during the high-speed cable laying operation.

Staff bag TV time

ENTERPRISING North Mersey staff "bagged" some peak time TV coverage for Manweb during the recent Southport Flower Show.

Torrential rain had managed to turn the showground into a swamp, and visitors were literally wallowing in mud.

Recognising a good publicity stunt, quick-thinking staff at the Manweb display came to the rescue and handed out poly-bags to passers-by to cover their shoes.

Blooming

A TV crew covering the Flower Show obviously thought it was a blooming good idea. The tea-time news included a short film showing visitors at the Show wearing Manweb bags!

Where old folk must keep cool

AN article in the local newspaper was a real eye-opener for Ron Sand, of Head Office Commercial, during his recent holiday in Arizona.

The story was a completely new angle on caring for the elderly. For while Manweb is concerned that old folk stay warm in winter—the basis of the Heatcare scheme—to keep hypothermia at bay, it seems our American counterparts have to contend with the exact opposite.

The newspaper was urging its readers to prevent Arizona's senior citizens from dying of hyperthermia—too much heat—by making sure they keep their air conditioning switched on!



the past

or Peter Spilsbury, of New Crane into the past.

ms and wrought iron balconies, is of the lobby of an elegant London realise it is, in fact, the interior of

on of Chester's official guide book, tricity Showrooms, Northgate Street. orporation. Domestic tariff 12½ per . Lighting tariff 4.4d per 1st 1,000 kw. plus 4d per unit.

ture right, time certainly hasn't stood remains the same.

Jackie Unsworth begins a monthly series focusing on the Districts

District No. 1

MANWEB'S North Mersey District is an area which has suffered over the years through industrial decline. In the main an urban sprawl, the District takes in part of Liverpool City and the top half of Knowsley Borough which, with its high unemployment, is one of the country's most under-privileged places. In complete contrast, the District also includes the relatively affluent rural coastal strip up to Southport.

Among North Mersey's biggest customers are Yorkshire Copper Tubes Ltd. (formerly Yorkshire Imperial Metals), the Nabisco food group, Bird's Eye and AC Spark Plugs, who don't actually make what their title suggests, but instead electronic dishes for General Motors! A recent addition to the list of customers is BEOCO, who make cooking oils.

On the commercial side, North Mersey has three main banks among its customers—the Midland, Trustee Savings Bank and the Girobank, which is just a stone's throw from the District Office in Bootle.

The Inland Revenue's Computer Section and the Health and Safety Executive are also based within the area.

District Manager Jim McLennan said: "We've suffered a fair bit in terms of industrial decline, but things are beginning to look better."

"It's encouraging to see that many of our big industrial customers are spending money on modernising their plants."

Covering 107 square miles, North Mersey District has just under 200,000 customers—46 per cent of them domestic and the rest industrial and commercial.

Theft of electricity is a major problem in the District, but the installation of card meters is starting to pay off.

Jim McLennan said: "Although the District is mainly urban, we do have a small rural section stretching up to Southport and Ormskirk. Only a third of Ormskirk is actually in Manweb, though, and the rest is in Norweb's area. The Ormskirk shop also belongs to Norweb."

Success

Manweb has just under 500 employees working in North Mersey, and according to Dr McLennan, who has been at the helm since 1985, the District is a "cheerful place with very little acrimony".

He said: "We've one of the youngest management teams in any district, with lots of women in top jobs."

One of the District's success stories is a recent innovation, aimed at female employees. Women who go on maternity leave can opt to return on a part-time basis, and this is proving very popular among staff.

The District is also proud of its record in delivering appliances to customers within three days, a scheme which was launched at the beginning of summer.

North Mersey



District Manager Dr Jim McLennan.



Assistant District Manager Terry Keenan.



Office Manager Len Cornah.



Mains Manager John MacDonald.



Supplies Manager Bill Tubey.



Energy Marketing Manager Cliff Robinson.



Installation Manager Ray Appleton.



Accounts Manager Bob Charnock.

District No. 2

ALTHOUGH geographically the smallest, Liverpool is Manweb's largest district in terms of the number of customers. Covering 68 square miles, the District comprises the southern half of the City and surrounding areas, with a total population of more than 500,000—almost 238,000 of them electricity customers.

Big industrial customers include Ford's Halewood plant, which produces the best-selling Escort at the rate of 1,250 per day, a performance which beats many of the continental factories.

With the refurbishment of the Docklands, Liverpool is rapidly developing into a major commercial and tourist attraction. The City Centre is also being redeveloped (the up-market Clayton Square shopping area is due to open at Christmas), and Prescott town centre is also being revamped.

District Manager Gerry Haughan said: "Developing the electrical load in the



Regional Shops Manager Alan Beanland.

domestic field has been difficult because of the 100 per cent availability of gas and the traditional acceptance of gas for home heating.

"However, great strides have been made in the electric heating of nursing homes, sheltered homes and the prestige flats at Wapping and Albert Docks."

Liverpool's turnover last year for contracting work reached £850,000 and the District is currently involved in the refurbishment of the Customs and Excise Office in the Cunard Building.

Theft of electricity is a massive problem in Liverpool, and last year more than 400 cases were reported to the police, while assessed accounts in the region of £91,000 were sent out to customers.

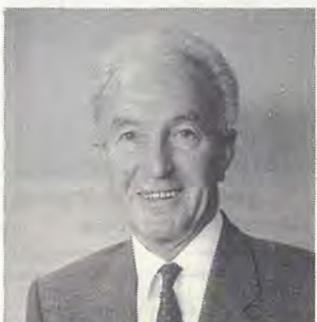
The District has installed 3,750 card meters and 17,500 polycarbonate covers under the meter modernisation programme.

Debt recovery is also a problem in Liverpool, due to high unemployment. There are currently 14,900 customers unable to pay their electricity bills—over £2 million worth of debts.

Based in Lister Drive, the Customer Accounts Telephone Enquiry Unit deals with 1,850 calls per day about tenancy changes, meter readings, payment arrangements and account queries. Currently Liverpool deals with 42,000 tenancy changes and 36,000 meter changes per year.

Regular meetings are held with Citizens' Advice Bureaux officers, welfare agencies, victims' support groups, social services and the DHSS. Last year a seminar was held at Lister Drive for representatives of welfare agencies, and similar meetings are to be held in the future with housing associations.

Liverpool



District Manager Gerry Haughan.



Office Manager Bill Allen.



Energy Marketing Manager Graham Houghton.



Supplies Manager Haydn Evans.



Customer Accounting Manager (Debt Control) Frank Threadgold.



Customer Accounting Manager (Records and Enquiries) Terry Clarke.



Installation Manager Dave Cousins.



Mains Manager Roy Osborne.

Next month . . . Spotlight on Mid-Mersey and Dee Valley

Three per cent predicament

MAJOR employers of Manweb's size have a statutory obligation to ensure that three per cent of staff are registered disabled people. Unfortunately, employers' attitudes to the disabled tend to be assessed on this statistical basis rather than on their overall approach to the employment of disabled people.

Every attempt has been made by Manweb to conform to this statutory obligation by notifying Jobcentres of all vacancies which are advertised externally.

In the 1970s we did manage to employ two per cent disabled people but this has been reduced to one per cent of staff, and because many of those are approaching retirement age the percentage is likely to drop even further over the next few years.

Very few employers have achieved the quota and it is a well-known fact that if all the registered disabled people in the country found a job tomorrow, not all employers would achieve their three per cent quota.

Many people who are disabled do not like to register for a variety of reasons, and because of this our Equal Opportunities Policy was recently revised to include a statement on the Board's attitude to the employment of disabled people. This statement applies to all disabled staff whether they are registered or not.

Encourage

Manweb's quota figure makes us appear an uncaring organisation but nothing could be further from the truth.

In early 1987 the whole subject of equal opportunities in employment was given a fresh impetus following the issuing of the Board's revised Policy statement. This involved the holding of seminars for all managers and senior staff in an effort to encourage them to take new initiatives in this area.

As far as the disabled are concerned, District Managers have been encouraged to build up their relationships with Disability Resettlement Officers

Mike Metcalfe, Assistant Personnel Manager, looks at the steps being taken by Manweb to recruit more registered disabled people

based at local Jobcentres.

In addition, facilities are being improved to make working for Manweb more attractive to disabled people. At Head Office, for example, a wheelchair lift has been installed on the stairs leading from the Restaurant to the Old Building, and there are now toilets for the disabled in both the main and Old Buildings.

Work has recently started on creating a new entrance for disabled people at the front of the main building, leading from pavement level to the lower ground floor, and a number of car parking spaces will be allocated.

Many people still have a traditional view of the disabled as people who are wheelchair bound, and it is important that we recognise there are many other forms of disability which entitle people to register and which we would like to help.

We would still like to encourage existing staff with disabilities to register, since they may well be eligible for certain aids which would help them in the working environment.

For example, people who are hard of hearing can get special telephones which have amplifiers, and for those with spinal troubles we may be able to obtain appropriate chairs.

Anyone who would like further information should contact their local Personnel Section.

Severe

● Wheelchair-bound Nicola Bailey and Mandy Burke were among a group of YTS trainees who took part in a Clerical Skills Course at Head Office recently.

It was the first time ever that young people with such severe disabilities had been able to use the Training Centre, and it was all made possible because of the newly-installed facilities—the wheelchair lift and special toilets.

Nicola, 21, was taken on by Mid-Cheshire District in May as a Clerical Assistant at Crewe, and Mandy, 16, started work as a Clerical Assistant at Head Office just a few weeks ago.

Nicola said: "I'm really enjoying myself. Everyone is being so helpful."

In future issues of *Contact* we will be looking at how the Districts are helping disabled staff.



Getting some "hands on" experience of the new Electratch home heating system is this group of Energy Marketing staff from Mid-Cheshire and Dee Valley Districts. The group was taking part in a series of training sessions organised by the Commercial Department to familiarise staff who will be involved in marketing Electratch with the new system. Pictured left to right are Judith Williams, from Dee Valley, Malcolm Bebbington and Judith McIntyre, from Mid-Cheshire, Bryn Jones from Dee Valley, Steve Tilley from Mid-Cheshire, and Dee Valley's David Roberts.

Speedy sales staff beat Electratch launch date

ON-THE-BALL Energy Sales staff at Mid-Mersey District clinched a major order for the new Electratch home heating system . . . a week before its launch!

The deal to supply six of the new systems for an exclusive housing development near Warrington was signed and sealed on August 24, although Electratch was only officially launched on September 1.

The systems will be installed in six converted 150-year-old buildings—five barns and a crofter's cottage—which are being lavishly renovated at Lower Whitley. When completed, the houses will sell for

around £120,000 each.

Mid-Mersey's Energy Sales Manager John Ellis said: "The developers, a building firm in Newton-le-Willows, were really made up when we gave them a demonstration of Electratch.

"The houses are at the quality end of the market, and our new system really fits the bill. They signed the order straight away, even though Electratch hadn't officially been launched."

Lend a hand . . .

AN invitation has been issued to Manweb's managers and supervisory staff to lend a helping hand to the budding company bosses of the future.

Advisers from various industries are being recruited to support groups of teenagers taking part in the 1988/89 Young Enterprise scheme.

Young Enterprise is a nationwide organisation which enables small groups of young people, while still at school or in training, to gain practical experience of running a business.

The scheme enables them to form companies which issue shares, sell products, deal in real money and operate their own company bank accounts.

Advisers, who can be senior or middle managers or junior trainees, are required to spend around two hours per week with the young people taking part. Their role is not to run the company, but to assist by giving advice when asked for.

Peter Ketchell, Chairman of the Young Enterprise Chester Area Board, said the applications were coming in thick and fast for this year's scheme.

"Pleasing though this enthusiasm is, it does present a problem, as we need three Advisers for each company, and we are now looking for management or supervisory staff from Manweb who would be willing to assist the young people to develop their understanding of running a company.

"It is a rewarding experience for Advisers to see the young people grow from the stage of needing frequent advice to that of complete self confidence."

Anyone interested in becoming an Adviser should contact Mr J. J. Dunne, BNFL Works, Capenhurst, Chester CH1 6ER, telephone 051-339 4101.

First meeting of retired staff

RETIRED staff in Gwynedd District are invited to attend the inaugural meeting of the Manweb Gwynedd Retired Staff Association, to be held on November 1 at the District Office in St. Helens Road, Caernarfon, starting at 10.30 a.m.

During the meeting a Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Committee will be elected, and suggestions will also be received for future meetings, outings and welfare activities.

Those who wish to keep in touch but who are unable to attend should contact General Services at the District Office.

Refreshments will be available after the meeting. Anyone having transport difficulties should contact Mr O. H. Thomas at the District, telephone Caernarfon 4166 ext. 2151.

The warm welcome that's waiting for you

WINTER is just around the corner and now is the time to prepare yourself to combat the cold during the coming months. And waiting to give you a warm welcome at Manweb's shops is a range of new products ideal for fending off the freezing weather.

You're sure to warm to two new lines from Dimplex—the FG24T upright portable fan-heater and the multi-purpose Coldwatcher heater. Creda has introduced an attractive and elegant new stove design fire, the Celeste, and the Sunbeam Snuggler wrap is a unique concept in personalised warmth.

Dimplex's FG24T, which sells at £24.95 (staff price £19.95) is a brand new style of fan heater. Whisper-quiet, it has a half-heat selector switch, thermostat, frost protection setting and fan-only operation, plus a clever design feature—integral cable storage. There are many places around the home where heat is needed, but a normal-size

heater is unnecessary. The Coldwatcher is designed specifically for such situations, where localised warmth is needed or where only a small heater is required for general heating or frost protection—such as in lofts, store rooms, garages, utility rooms, sheds and caravans.

With its frost-stat setting,

the Coldwatcher is also ideal in greenhouses and conservatories. It is ultra-safe, with automatic switch off if it accidentally overheats through misuse, and is stylishly designed in misty grey with dawn grey trim. It can be fixed to a floor or wall, or used free-standing in an upright or horizontal position, and sells at £29.95 (staff price £20.75).

Unique

The new addition to Creda's range of fires is the Celeste, which costs £269.95 (staff price £215.95). Finished in matt black with brass trims, it has hearth-warming fuel-effect coals which

glow behind tinted glass doors. These, when opened, allow the four Solarwarm elements behind two ceramic panels to be operated, providing up to 2,000 watts of controlled heat.

But the really clever part is the unique Electrotherm electronic control, which automatically maintains the temperature while you can enjoy an even warmth economically, without having to lift a finger.

The Sunbeam Snuggler is an electrically heated wrap, measuring 50 x 60 inches, which can keep you snug and cosy all around the home. It is economical to run, providing all

day warmth for less than the cost of using a lightbulb.

Available in warm sand colour, the Snuggler is made of luxuriously soft machine washable acrylic, is BEAB approved and comes with a two year guarantee. It costs £29.95 (staff price £23.95), and included in every pack is a redemption form enabling you to claim £4 worth of electricity stamps to put towards your next electricity bill.

Further details and colour brochures on these and other heating appliances are available from Appliance Marketing, Room 2W1, Head Office, or from any Manweb shop.

JOE Bloggs was not only the owner of a humble name, he was also in a somewhat humble and unprepossessing job. The truth was that he did not really know what his job consisted of.

He had originally been employed by the South Ince and District Electricity Board, known locally as **SIDEBOARD**, but with a recent work sharing scheme also spent a considerable amount of time at the offices of **Hafod-And-Rhos-On-Dee Electricity Board**, or **HARDBOARD**, in a public relations capacity.

The situation was ideal from Joe's point of view, for it meant that with a bit of judicious story-telling to the management he could sometimes have as many as two days off per week without either Board being any the wiser—**SIDEBOARD** thinking him to be hard at work at **HARDBOARD**, and vice versa.

He did, of course, do **SOME** work. He wrote progress reports on everything from substation maintenance to tariff calculations, interspersed with suitably ambiguous speeches for various department heads. He had never been inside a substation in his life, knew little about tariffs, and the best of the paperwork he produced



consisted mostly of his version of other people's.

Still, he managed to keep the paperwork flowing, drew a reasonable salary, and what if he did come in late and go home early, or do a lot of his writing between pints of best bitter in the local pub?

He had a secure job and was quite idyllically happy with the situation. That is, until one Monday morning when he arrived at his office in the headquarters of **HARDBOARD** to find an extra desk beside his own and a stern-faced middle-aged gentleman sitting there pointedly flourishing his pocket watch.

"Wh-who are you?" he asked.

"I'm surprised you don't recognise me," the other replied. "I am Inspector Probe and I have been appointed to this department to supervise privatisation."

Joe felt quite faint. He had heard of privatisation, of course, but didn't really think that he'd personally be affected by it.

"Well, Inspector," he said, "I have a dental appointment in half an hour and I'm afraid I'll be away all day, so I'll see you tomorrow." This, for once, was perfectly true. He had

A light-hearted look at privatisation

Stand up Private Bloggs

Featuring Inspector Probe

by WARNER WILLIAMS

suffered from toothache for some days.

Inspector Probe gazed stonily ahead. "All right then, off you go, and for goodness sake don't be late in the morning."

Joe, in due course, had his tooth out, took a taxi home, and, feeling a bit groggy from the effect of the anaesthetic, quite against medical advice poured himself a very large Scotch, made his excuses to his wife and went to bed, where he lay worriedly thinking about Inspector Probe, privatisation, and his job.

Much later, Joe stirred, gazed lazily about himself and noticed that it seemed to be quite light outside. "Good heavens," he thought, "I mustn't be late for work with that Inspector Probe chap there," and so, dressing very quietly and ignoring breakfast, he literally jumped into his car and a little later arrived at his office at just one minute past nine.

Inspector Probe was standing at attention behind his desk, his face like a thundercloud. "Late, eh, Bloggs. Well this will not be tolerated once we're a private company. Take off your jacket and bend down!" Joe, taken by surprise, did exactly as he was asked and for his trouble received three agonising whacks, heartily delivered by Inspector Probe with a three foot cane.

"And that's just the beginning," puffed the Inspector. "I sorted out **MANWEB** last year and, by golly, **SIDEBOARD** and **HARDBOARD** certainly need some shaking up!"

Joe, in some discomfort, sat down gingerly and glanced sheepishly at Inspector Probe. "Do you think I could please make a cup of tea?" he enquired. "No you can't," thundered the other. "Get all those silly ideas out of your head right now, and by the way would you please hand me your wristwatch and your calculator."

Joe did so and was dumbfounded when Inspector Probe threw them to the ground and jumped up and down on them until they were broken into tiny pieces.

"There," he said, "I'll tolerate no clock-watching or silly timewasting gimmicks. You'll

have to think for yourself from now on. Give your brain some exercise. Now sit still and listen carefully to me for a few minutes."

The Inspector began a short lecture. "As you know," he began, "**HARDBOARD** and **SIDEBOARD** are to be amalgamated and privatised. There is, of course, some bad news and some good news. The bad news is that I will be offered early retirement, but from your point of view, the good news is that **YOU** have been chosen to be the workforce."

"The workforce?" spluttered poor Bloggs, by now thoroughly dejected.

"Silence!" roared the Inspector, simultaneously cracking him across the face with the back of his hand, and kicking him on the shin. "Yes, the workforce. Mobility of labour is to be the watchword, and retraining of yourself so that you will be capable of doing any job within the jurisdiction of the **BOARD P.L.C.**"

At every interjection between the letters **P—L—C**, Probe struck Bloggs on the top of the head with his clenched fist.

"One day you may be checking accounts in Chester, the next you could be digging trenches in Flint, rewiring a block of flats in Bootle or single-handedly covering a meter reading round encompassing the whole of Wales. You'll get a van of course, but I'm afraid you'll have to buy your own petrol. You start first thing tomorrow. Now, any questions?"

"Yes," said Joe, now almost in tears. "How can I be retrained by tomorrow for all this extra work? I've never done anything like it in my life. I'd be utterly useless."

"Aha," whispered Inspector Probe, "you've heard of all the latest technological advances in electronics no doubt. I am pleased to say that the Board is now capable of storing literally millions of pieces of information on a few slivers of tape and a handful of microchips.

"Our technical department has now perfected a way of inserting such information directly into the human brain. Instant learning, in fact, without all those boring old books and lectures we used to have."

Bloggs's voice was barely a croak! "You mean some kind of implant? Surgery and all that? But I have always been terrified of clinics and surgeons!"

A strange grin, almost a leer, transformed the Inspector's impassive visage. "Oh no Bloggs, you won't have to visit any kind of clinic. In order to save the surgeons' fees the Board has asked me to perform the operation myself."

So saying, he leapt forward and dealt Bloggs a mighty blow to the head, instantly felling him to the ground. As he lay there dazed, Bloggs watched with terror as the Inspector produced a metal cylinder from one drawer of his desk and a huge stainless steel brace and bit from another. He advanced on poor Bloggs with a maniacal grin on his face, cackling all the while.

As Inspector Probe came nearer, metal cylinder in one hand and brace and bit in the other, Joe squirmed in a frantic effort to avoid the dreadful operation about to be performed on him. He kicked and wriggled and screamed as loudly as he could. "For pity's sake, no!"



Leave me alone, please stop!"

"And why should I leave you alone?" boomed a voice in his left ear. "I am your wife after all, and it's time you were getting up for work."

Joe looked about the room dazedly, noting the tangled bedclothes, but utterly relieved that his terrifying experience was just a nightmare after all.

He dressed and, still feeling somewhat subdued, eventually arrived at his office, for once ten minutes early.

"Good morning," said Inspector Probe, quite cheerfully. "That's what I like to see, a good early start." That day, Joe Bloggs worked as he had never worked before, continuing through his lunch hour and finishing almost 15 minutes late in the afternoon.

The Inspector smiled. "Well Bloggs, if all the staff worked as hard as you the Board's future would certainly be very bright indeed. Time we went home, eh?"

"Mind you, I've still got a couple of jobs to do even after a hard day's work. The wife wants a few shelves putting up. Can't say I blame her, she's been waiting weeks now. I kept putting it off because of lack of the proper tools, but you know women, she's outsmarted me and bought me one of those newfangled brace and bits.

"You know the one I mean, one of those expensive stainless steel things. Got no excuse now have I?"

**Cartoons by
Jeff Baker**

Easy as 'Yugo' in the sunshine



Sunning themselves during a recent holiday to Yugoslavia are members of the Liverpool Electric Power and Lighting Sports and Welfare Club. The group of Manweb and CEBG retired employees spent a fortnight at the resort of Rabac, a fishing village set in magnificent scenery. During their stay, the party went on coach trips to Venice, Lake Bled and Istria, and boat outings to some of the nearby islands.

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FRED'S PUZZLE CORNER

Don't get cold feet . . .

"FREEZER jolly good fellow . . ." That's what Fred hopes you'll be saying after you've tackled this month's puzzle.

The word-square is now a rival to the crossword in popularity, and all you have to do to solve the puzzle is find the word FREEZER hidden in the grid. Draw a ring around or highlight the word, add your name and work location, or home address if you are retired, in the space shown and send the completed entry to: "Freezer Puzzle", Contact, Room GE26, Manweb, Sealand Road, Chester CH1 4LR, to arrive no later than Thursday, October 13.

The senders of the first two correct entries opened will each receive a £5 prize.

Name

Address

R	Z	E	Z	E	F	E	R	Z	E	F	E	R	Z	E	F
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PLEASE PRINT YOUR FREE AD. ON THIS COUPON OR ON PLAIN PAPER

(BLOCK CAPS PLEASE)

Name:

Work place (or retired)

Send to: 'CONTACT' FREE ADS, MANWEB, SEALAND ROAD, CHESTER CH1 4LR.

HOLIDAYS

Aberystwyth—Six-berth caravans to let from £35 a week (less ten per cent discount for electricity supply staff and their families). Mains electricity, cooker, fridge and private toilet. Site facilities inc. clubhouse, shop/restaurant and children's play area. Within easy walking distance of beach and town centre. Tel: 0970 3596 after 5.00 pm (Tomos Davies).

Brittany/SW France—Caravans and mobile homes. Self-drive pack. Tel: Crewe internal 178 or 0270 766675 (Ian Linford).

Caravan—Towyn, Near Rhyl. Six-berth, two bedrooms, shower, fridge, fully fitted. From £75 per week. Tel: 0978-362615/352653 (Mrs Jones).

Cardigan—12 miles. Lux. six-berth static caravan, near beaches. Families only. Tel: 0492 68253 (evenings).

Carmel—Caernarfon. 19th Century stone cottage in own grounds. Excellent views. Three bedrooms, bathroom, lounge and parlour. Large kitchen with cooker, fridge and freezer. Tel: 0286 880 749. Alwyn Pritchard, 16 Maes Hyfryd, Carmel, Caernarfon, Gwynedd.

Criccieth—North Wales. House overlooking village green. Sleeps six. CTV. Beach and shops two mins. Tel: 076671 2614 (Ann Tudor).

France—B & B, H/B, caravans and camping. Tarn et Garrone Region. Close to Junctions 8 and 9 on Autoroute between Bordeaux and Toulouse. Excellent catering, including French, Indian and vegetarian cooking. Much to see and do, or just relax in sunshine. Ex-SEB employee. Tel: David Boniface, 010-33 (63-95-95-20).

French Riviera—Six-berth caravan, all amenities on site, within easy reach of Monaco, St Tropez, etc. Golf, riding close by. SAE to M. Williams, The Lodge, Lingen, Bucknell, Shropshire, or tel. 0544 267579.

Newquay—Cornwall. Luxury caravans with shower, and economy vans. Colour TV, flush toilet, etc. Pleasant site near town and beaches. Cleaned and maintained by owner. From £50 per week. Tel: 0637 876589 (Gill).

Free Ads

Newquay—Cornwall. Family-run guest house with good home cooking. Family rooms. Friendly atmosphere, Sea views. 200 yards from town centre. Dinner, bed and breakfast from £70 per week. Former Merseyside family will make you welcome. Disc. for Manweb empls. Apply Avondale, 28 Georges Road, Newquay, Cornwall. Tel: 0637 872234.

Newquay—Cornwall. Guest house, sea views, two minutes from beaches. Quiet area close to town, good food, comfort, prkng. BB/EM £65-£80 per week. Discount for ESI staff. Tel: 063787 4291 (Mr Pleasants).

Pony-Trekking—And farm holidays. Accompanied one-hour to full-day treks for novices or experienced riders. Holiday cottages available. Self-ctrng. or bed and breakfast, full or half-board. Lic. restaurant open to non-residents. Lunch, afternoon tea, dinner. Private parties catered for. Further details: Hwylfa Ddafydd Country Farm Holidays. Tel: Colwyn Bay 516965.

Port Grimaud—Six miles St Tropez. Four/six-bth. caravans, with electricity, h. and c. water, shower. On three-star hotel site. Luxury coach travel from most areas. Tel: 0670 712399.

Porthmadog—Holiday bungalow, sleeps six. Black Rock Sands five minutes' drive. Convenient Ffestiniog Railway, Snowdonia National Park. For infmtn.: C. Jones, 2 Meadow Drive, Porthmadog. Tel: 0766 2519.

Tenerife—Get away to the sun. From £30 per week. Aprtmnts. in Los Christianos. Access to two large pools, tennis crts., two restaurants, maid service. Only 50 yards from a golden beach. Flights arranged. Tel: 061-483 8314.

Weston-sup'r-Mare—Static caravan on farm. Six-berth, sep. dbl. bedroom, shower, toilet, TV, etc. All-season price £70 per week. Tel: 093472 292 (Mrs Huett).

Llandudno—April Court. Small family-run private hotel (Welsh Tourist Board—two crown). Close to local amenities, beaches, town centre, theatres, golf courses, etc. New Alpine Ski Complex in beautiful natural setting. Ideal base for exploring beauty-spots of Snowdonia. Good home cooking and comfortable, friendly atmosphere. Children welc. Tea-making facilities. Car park. Bed and breakfast, with or without evening meal. Enquiries to April Court, St David's Place, Llandudno, Gwynedd LL30 2UG. Tel: 0492 77898. Disc. for Elec. Board employees and families (both past and present).

FOR SALE

Opel Ascona 1.6S—A reg. Metallic blue, 53,000 miles. Taxed and MOT, v.g.c., stereo. £2,650 o.n.o. Tel: HO internal 2091 (Debbie) or home: Buckley 541611.

Ford Capri 1.6L—1979 (T). Spoiler, spots, alarm, stereo radio-cassette. Good body-work. Excellent runner. MOT March 1989. £750 o.n.o. Tel: 051-625 9302 after 6 p.m., or HO internal 2940.

Everest—Three secondary glazed windows. 92½ ins. × 46½ ins. deep, 46½ ins. × 45½ ins. deep and 68¾ ins. ¾ 39¼ ins. deep. Contact C. Buckley, Tel: HO internal 2971.

Chinon—35 mm. and case, plus 200 mm. and 35 mm. with flash and filters, slide copier and bulk loader. £70. Elmo 60 sound projector, previewer and splicer. £80. Patterson dark-room, many accessories and papers, £50. Contact L. Butterworth, Tel: Mid-Mersey internal 2136.

Gas Heater—Butane Radiant. Good condition. £20 o.n.o. Contact Dave Jones, Tel: Deeside 819748.

Church boost

AN appeal to restore a Wrexham church to its former glory has been given a £1,500 boost by Manweb.

A selection of Creda built-in kitchen appliances, including a cooker, fridge/freezer and dishwasher, have been donated as prizes in a grand draw to raise funds for St. Giles's Parish Church.

Manweb's shops at Wrexham and Johnstown will also sell raffle tickets for the draw, which will take place early in December.

The Restoration fund now stands at more than £20,000. It is hoped the raffle will raise a further £25,000 towards the target of £150,000.

Sleep safely

STAFF and pensioners are being urged to sleep safely this autumn by checking their electric blankets for signs of age, general wear and tear.

A special leaflet to explain the importance of regular safety checks will be distributed throughout Manweb's 58 shops.

The leaflet also points out that underblankets should be checked to see if they have "Overheat Protection", which has been a legal requirement for the past three years.

Special savings are available on selected electric blankets at Manweb shops until the end of November and details of these are also included in the leaflet.

Advisers appointed

MANWEB has appointed Valin Pollen Limited as its corporate communications and investor relations consultants.

The London-based consultancy will be involved in planning and implementing a programme of activities for Manweb in preparation for the privatisation of the electricity area boards, provisionally scheduled for early 1990.

It will be looking at Manweb's need for communications with customers and potential shareholders within its region, including its own employees, and at Manweb's role in the national investor relations programme directed towards city audiences.

Managing Director Neil Hedges said: "We are delighted to have been appointed by Manweb. We have identified a number of important communications tasks in preparation for Manweb's privatisation, which will offer us very interesting opportunities to produce some first class work."

Prizewinners post-poned!

DUE to the postal strike, which delayed many of your entries, the winners of last month's "Sum This Up" puzzle will be announced in the October edition of Contact.

HAMBONE by Mike Flanagan



Sparks will fly at RL match

SUNDAY, January 22, 1989, is all set to be an electrifying date on the Rugby League calendar.

Sparks are sure to fly as Warrington's "Wires" clash with the powerful Wigan RL team in a match sponsored by Manweb.

And spectators can be certain of some high-voltage action—particularly since neighbouring Norweb has announced a three-year sponsorship deal with the Wigan club!

John Ellis, Energy Sales Manager at Manweb's Mid-Mersey District, said: "We are based right next to the Warrington ground, and thought it would be a good idea to sponsor one of their matches."

"When we found out it was to be the Warrington v Wigan game, we were really over the moon! Especially with Norweb just announcing their sponsorship of the Wigan club."

He added: "It won't just be Warrington v Wigan; it will also be Manweb v Norweb, and I think we can expect some powerful action . . ."

Fingers crossed for John

STAFF at Liverpool District will be keeping a special eye on the Olympic Games on October 2

That's the day Lister Drive Draughtsman John Woods will be speeding around the marathon course, wearing the emerald green vest of Ireland.

Born and bred in Liverpool, 32-year-old John qualified to sport the shamrock because his mother comes from Ballina, Co. Mayo.

In the run-up to the Seoul Olympics, John has prepared himself for the race of his life by running up to 110 miles a week.

Crossword Solution

Crossword No. 3

ACROSS: 1 Sally forth, 7 Avow, 8 Browning, 10 Seagull, 11 Eleven, 13 Rectors, 16 Shed, 18 Doll, 19 Dunkirk, 22 Ensign, 23 Bestrew, 25 Tangible, 26 Mien, 27 Gulf Stream.

DOWN: 1 Sublease, 2 Loosened, 3 Yonder, 4 Owns, 5 Haggard, 6 Mould, 9 Gesture, 12 Necklet, 14 Sociable, 15 Blenheim, 17 Dusting, 20 Knight, 21 Devil, 24 Waif.



Dressed to kill! The Manweb soccer squad show off their new track suit tops while FC Secretary Mark Harrison (right) and Club Captain Calum Kennedy celebrate the Contact Electric sponsorship with a handshake. (Photo courtesy of the Chester Chronicle)

Soccer squad gets into gear

SPONSORSHIP worth £300 has put the Head Office Football Club on the right track this season. The money, put up by Manweb's Commercial Contracting Department, has provided the Club's First XI squad with 11 smart track suit tops and three full track suits for their Manager and trainers.

The track suits were presented by Alan Littler, Principal Engineer in Contracting, to Club Captain Calum Kennedy, 2nd Engineer in Energy Marketing, Liverpool District, who said: "The sponsorship was very gratefully received from Commercial Contracting. It has been vital to enable us to purchase much-needed new track suits for the First XI."

Manweb has two soccer teams which play in the Chester and

District Football League on Saturday afternoons. The First XI play in the Premier Division and the Second XI is in the Third Division.

Funds

Matches are played in the Chester area but there are also venues in four Manweb Districts—North Wirral, Clwyd, Mid-Cheshire and Dee Valley. Cup games have also taken the teams to Liverpool and Mid-Mersey.

The Club raises funds through subscriptions to pay for matches, pitch and kit, and also receives "200" Club support.

For anyone interested in watching the team play on Saturday, the home venue is opposite the Manweb Head Office building in Sealand Road, kick-off 2.30 p.m. Football training is on Wednesday nights at the same venue, starting 6 p.m., and supporters are welcome to attend.

Golfers are in the swing at their annual contest

OSWESTRY'S annual Golf Society Competition was held on August 5 at picturesque Llanymynech Golf Club, which has the unusual distinction of being geographically situated in both Wales and England—or, if you prefer, England and Wales, writes Office Manager Sid Warburton.

Twenty-three members and guests took part and everyone had a most enjoyable day. First prize went to Sid Pugh, who also happens to be the President of Llanymynech Golf Club, 2nd prize went to Keith Tomlinson, and 3rd prize to Dennis Hughes, the Society's Secretary, who did a grand job in organising this year's competition.

Pictured presenting the prizes is Oswestry District Manager Lyn Price (centre), with Dennis Hughes (left) and Sid Pugh.



New talent is needed

MANWEB'S Head Office Sports and Social Club is looking for new talent to join the Football, Badminton and Netball sections.

The Badminton team plays in the Chester and District League, and more players are needed to join the regular Tuesday night sessions at the Northgate Arena.

The section also wants beginners to join, as coaching sessions can be arranged. Anyone interested should contact Laura Phillips on ext. 2422.

"Age is no barrier to join our section," say the Head Office Netball Team, who train on Mondays from 5.15 p.m. to 6.15 p.m. and play league matches on Wednesdays at the Northgate Arena.

The team may be getting a new coach this year and members are looking forward to the

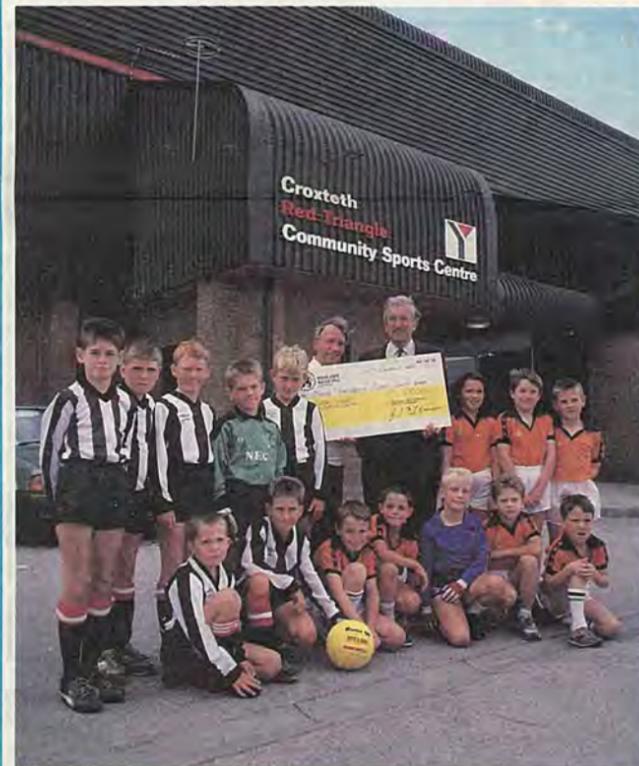
new season. If anyone is interested in joining, the contact is Sue Reece on ext. 2690.

The football season has already started, and so far the first team has won one game and lost one, while the reserves have drawn their first match.

Training is on Wednesday nights, and anyone interested in kicking off a new sporting interest should get in touch with Mark Harrison on ext. 3014.

● The Club has a regular booking at the Chester College baths on Friday evenings, from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. If you fancy a dip after work, contact Bert Addison on ext. 2403. Please take your club membership card along or you may not be allowed in.

Dr Jim fixes it for five-a-siders



NORTH Mersey District Manager Jim McLennan kicks off the new season by presenting a giant cheque for £500 to the Manweb Total Heating Junior Indoor Soccer League.

It is the second year running that Manweb has sponsored the five-a-side League, which has been so successful that it now has 56 teams of young players, aged between 10 and 13, from all over Merseyside.

During its second season, the Total Heating League will play at two main venues in Liverpool—Croxth Sports Centre and the University Comprehensive Community School. Matches will be played right up the end of February next year.

John Appleton, Energy Sales Engineer at North Mersey, is involved with the League. He said: "Our sponsorship of £500 helps to buy the 12 trophies and awards which will be presented to the winners, runners up and most sporting teams."

"The money also goes towards a donation to the University Comprehensive Community School for the use of their ground, referees' fees and sundry expenses."

The League is affiliated to the Liverpool County Football Association. Negotiations are now under way for a well-known soccer personality to attend the presentation of trophies in March 1989.

Pictured receiving the giant cheque from Jim McLennan is League Organiser Don Mitchell and some of the young players.