

Contact

August 1979



Civic Visit
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MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE

Our Industry— Past, Present and Future

AT THE annual conference for senior management staff held at Head Office a short time ago, the guest speaker on the first day was Sir Francis Tombs, Chairman of The Electricity Council.

His main theme was the structure and future of the electricity supply industry. He began by saying that within a few days of taking office, the Minister of Energy in the new Government had promised to look at our organisation and would put it 'at the top of the homework list.'

Sir Francis commented that the diversity of management among the 13 independent Electricity Boards in England and Wales and the high degree of separation between production and sales had, through the years, led to a great deal of difficulty.

Sir Francis took the opportunity to remind his audience of the size of our industry in England and Wales. He stated that our turnover this year was over £5,000 million and we employed 160,000 people to serve 20 million customers. We spent £700 million last year on capital projects.

He said that the problems which bedevilled our industry from its very early days through the various Acts and Reports, was the balance between centralisation and devolution in our very large organisation. "There is no perfect solution to this problem," he said. "The answer lies between the extremes of total devolution and anarchy and total centralisation and dictatorship."

In expounding his views on the evils of centralisation, Sir Francis said that he encouraged local management to adopt 'The Nelson Touch' from time to time by turning a blind eye to central instructions where they could justify their actions and to use their initiative, courage and self-respect.

The conference delegates then went to work in syndicates to discuss the implications at Area Board level of the points raised in Sir Francis' talk. Each syndicate prepared a number of questions for discussion at the plenary session which was held after lunch.

Earlier, the conference had been opened by Mr. Richard Gales (Deputy Chairman) who briefly reported on the actions arising from the previous Management Conference.

He spoke of channels of communication and of the need for early consultations with all staff concerned prior to any major changes or developments. He went on to advise all District Officers to be prompt in putting proposals to their LACs.

On other aspects of communication, Mr. Gales commended the use of our staff magazine 'Contact' for articles on policy decisions. He said that there was a case for using the magazine more widely to give broader publicity to developments.

He spoke of the 'Customer Care' programme which was designed to improve our service, and, in turn, relations with our customers. "We shall spend money, time and effort to provide the service our customers have, and indeed are entitled to expect, from a public service industry," he commented.

* * *

On the final morning of the conference our Chairman Mr. Ben Hastings gave a review of our work and the achievements during the past year and looked at what lay ahead.

Our sales figures, he said, showed a slight increase but our growth, for the second year in succession, was the lowest of all Area Boards. "This is an eloquent testimony to the state of the economy on Merseyside," he stated.

Mr Hastings went on to say that over a two-year period, our industry had succeeded in keeping prices below the rate of inflation. He then pointed to the 'grey spot' being that MANWEB costs had increased more than inflation over the previous year.

He continued, "The size of our profit is not a very reliable indicator of our performance" explaining that if we can increase our prices less than the average Area Board, then this would be the best measure of good performance.

"If we can achieve that, particularly when our sales are lower than other Area Boards, it would be a magnificent performance," he said. "That's what we shall be aiming for. That's the way I would like us all to judge our performance over the next few years and it's a test that the customers readily appreciate too!"

He then proceeded to outline plans being made to get our contracting business moving and he expected, under the new-style accounting, to see a profit in all Districts. Where any District seemed unlikely to achieve profitability we would have to consider reducing the scale of the business or restructuring it.

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Contact

THE STAFF MAGAZINE
OF THE
MERSEYSIDE AND
NORTH WALES
ELECTRICITY BOARD

Vol. 31 No. 8

August 1979

A POSITIVE STAND

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At some time or other we are all likely to find ourselves involved in a discussion on the subject of nuclear power.

During recent years this topic has been turned into an increasingly prominent issue. Politicians, trades unions, genuine conservationists, exhibitionists, professional demonstrators and fishers-in-troubled-waters have all made it their business to expound their views to a public which must grow increasingly bemused with every contribution.

Nuclear power is **our** business. We are the people who are called upon to meet the public demand for electricity—a task which we could not discharge today without the contribution of our existing nuclear stations. And we are the people who can do most to clear away confusion and misunderstanding wherever we find it.

Our own Chairman took the lead when he spoke on the subject to press representatives recently. His comments are reported elsewhere in this number of *Contact*.

We also reproduce in full an Electricity Council leaflet entitled "*The Need for Nuclear Power—Your Questions Answered.*"

A careful study of the contents of this leaflet will perhaps do much to clarify the nuclear issues in our own minds. At the same time it will put us in a position to make a positive contribution to the nuclear debate and to counter the impact of emotive and misleading propaganda. By so doing we can help to swing public opinion behind the policies which our industry sees as essential if we are to continue to supply all the electricity likely to be needed in the future.

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

HEAT PUMPS FOR HOSPITALS IN THE 80's

THE case for heat pumps as a means of conserving energy and providing the best possible environmental conditions for hospital patients was made by Sir Francis Tombs, The Electricity Council's Chairman, when speaking at a symposium on Hospital Engineering at the Institution of Mechanical Engineers in London recently.

Sir Francis said that heat pumps had already gained more general acceptance in North America and continental Europe than seemed to be the case in Britain. He explained that one building in this country had now been satisfactorily operating for nearly ten years as an all-electric building using the refrigeration plant as an internal source heat pump. This was not a hospital, but the headquarters of the Merseyside and North Wales Electricity Board—"a building which has been well researched and monitored in energy terms."

Many buildings, said Sir Francis, had been constructed with the same conceptual approach to the mechanical and electrical services. Internal source heat pumps and heat recovery techniques, he went on, were now established with proven plant available, and heat recovery systems which produced worthwhile savings in oil and gas were being applied in industrial processes and in commercial buildings.

Sir Francis said that population growth and population dispersal throughout the country were two unpredictable influences which affected both

electricity supply and health service planners. A flexible response to future events and future energy requirements was essential. Electricity was an energy form which provided an assured supply for hospitals.

"It will be wise for designers of any new hospital buildings to ensure that they satisfy the criteria of low energy, largely electric and long life. Any Regional Health Authority or private hospital owner which pursues this design approach will rely solely on us for their energy supply. But such an approach will automatically protect hospitals against major fossil fuel uncertainties."

"The mix of our generating capacity, solidly based on indigenous British coal, assures your requirements in the immediate years ahead. The present important contribution from nuclear energy will increase, building on the firm foundation of safety which has come from the most thorough engineering."

Nuclear power, Sir Francis said, will, by 1981, provide 20 per cent of the electricity generated. In economic terms, he pointed out, nuclear generation is cheaper than generation by coal or oil. *"I expect that it will continue to be cheaper in the years ahead and that the gap will widen as fuel prices increase."*

Sir Francis went on to say that the reliability of electricity supply in this country was extremely high. *"The Area Electricity Boards particularly aim to maintain supplies to hospitals at all times. Foresight prompted the East Anglian Regional Health Authority to proceed with Britain's first all-electric hospital in Peterborough. I believe that with equal foresight the Department of Health is currently working on design studies for a super low energy hospital as an exemplar and test bed for the 1980s and beyond."*

MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE—

(continued from page 146)

Mr. Hastings dispelled the theory that productivity only added to unemployment and he went to some lengths—including the prospects of a shorter working week based on improved productivity—to do so.

On 'Customer Care,' our Chairman stressed that it was not "just a flash-in-the-pan". He was encouraged to see that there was a fairly general enthusiastic support for the programme. *"The best form of public relations activity is 'Customer Care'. Let the individual customers judge for themselves,"* he commented.

In the field of industrial democracy, Mr. Hastings said that management should now be preparing for a greater involvement of staff and staff representatives. *"Real consultation rather than the passage of information."* He advised managers not to be afraid to take initiatives in the sphere of staff consultation.

He gave evidence of the Board's intention to delegate and decentralise wherever possible. *"What we need to evolve is a more satisfactory balance between Head Office and the Districts where, at the end of the day, we can say that Head Office monitor and motivate the Districts. That is their role as opposed to the current tendency to check and control. This should apply within every department and with every group... the principle of delegation."*

Bringing his remarks to a close, Mr. Hastings said that MANWEB would now be taking over the operation and maintenance of the 132-kV system. He spoke of accidents and sickness rates being too high in our Board commenting that these would have to be looked into; our energy marketing strategy, now under review, and our success with debtors—*"our performance there most encouraging."*

He then thanked everyone for their contribution to what had been, on the whole, a very successful and encouraging year and he asked for more of the same in the year ahead.

WE GET LETTERS . . .

about Economy 7 . . .

From a Knutsford customer:

"I was pleased to hear you owe me £106.68 and would be glad to receive a refund at your early convenience. £30 a month appears a little generous so I enclose a revised standing order reducing the monthly amount to £25.

"I consider the annual charge in an all-electric house not unreasonable. Economy 7 seems to be worthwhile and storage radiators do not deserve their adverse reputation."

. . . reliability

From a Birkenhead lady to Jane Perkins, a clerk in prepayment amendments at North Wirral District—

"My grateful thanks to you for explaining fully what I must do in my quest for help . . . you have done me a service and I only wish all were like yourself—reliable!"

. . . good thinking . . .

A shift electrician working in our Liverpool District, Colin Bellingham, used his common sense and prevented what could have been a very serious situation. The following letter sums up his action.

"The tenant in 19b (upstairs from our flat) 'phoned your emergency electrician on Saturday night as she smelled some rubber burning and thought she had some trouble with her wiring. Unfortunately the fusebox in our flat was the culprit. The electrician traced the fire and sent for the Fire Brigade who duly turned up and rendered the house safe.

"In passing, the Fire Officer commended your member of staff for his 'good thinking' in

following up the situation and, unsuspectingly, we were awakened and the good thinking of your electrician averted what might have been a nasty experience for my husband and me. I should like therefore to add my warm appreciation to this man and hope that you will be able to trace him and thank him on our behalf. He also 'phoned the City Council Dept., who came along at 5 a.m. and did a temporary repair so that we could have lights and hot water.

"It isn't often these days that workmen get a pat on the back, more's the pity, but on this occasion I feel I can't let the event pass without expressing our gratitude."

. . . sympathy . . .

An especially moving letter, typed by a blind gent, received at North Mersey District—

"My very sincere thanks to all the members of your staff with whom I was in contact during a rather difficult period. After my first visit I left feeling reassured, knowing that my situation would be resolved. Each time I visited the office the staff were at all times understanding, sympathetic, patient, and made practical suggestions. May I mention Mrs. Mary Dowd—to me she was the epitome of help and did far more than could possibly be expected of any person to smooth my troubled way.

"In common with many of the public I considered the Board a monolithic, uncaring, faceless and soulless organisation. How wrong we can be. I will always hold a brief for the Electricity Board!"

. . . efficiency . . .

From a Mid-Cheshire District customer:

"I recently purchased, and had installed on 27th July, a bathroom

shower unit from the Crewe branch of MANWEB.

"I would like you to know how pleased I was by the efficient way in which the electrician carried out the installation.

"Not only did he carry out a first-class job but he insisted on cleaning-up afterwards.

"It is so unusual to find a workman of this class nowadays."

Electrician Barry Westwood was our Man from MANWEB.

. . . expertise . . .

Proving that MANWEB knows best, a customer from Rhyl in our Clwyd District wrote as follows:

"I refer to your estimate for the above repairs and my acceptance—and would ask you to please cancel the order for the oven timer. As a result of the cooker fusing yet again I called in one of your electricians who discovered the original cause of the fusing and told me it was not the timer which was at fault. The cooker was put right yesterday morning.

"Please accept my apologies for any undue trouble I may have caused but my own electrician was so certain it was the timer I took his word for it. I shall know better next time and call in the real experts straight away.

"Thank you and your electrician for your prompt, efficient and courteous attention."

Our man who knew his trade was electrician D. Jones.

. . . and for services rendered!

To Aberystwyth District, from a lady now moved out of the area:

"As I have now left Wales and shall no longer be one of your customers I should like to thank you for the really first-class service I have always had, not only from the men who came to my house from time to time but in the shop at Dolgellau."

'Customer Care'

IDEAS COMPETITION PRIZEWINNERS

Colleagues who submitted prizewinning suggestions under our *Customer Care* Ideas Competition will be presented with their cheques at meetings of their Local Advisory Committees.

Winning suggestions came from:

Messrs. Thomas Stott, meter reader, Runcorn, and **Leonard Ridgeway**, meter reader/collector, Chester. (To make increased efforts to let our customers know when meter reader/collectors are likely to call and so reduce the number of estimated accounts).

Mr. Peter Goulding, senior executive officer, Computer Services, Head Office, and **Miss Joanne Evans**, receptionist, Head Office. (Provision of a *Customer Care* reception area at Head Office.)

Mr. Terence Clarke, supervisor, Southport shop. (Provision of *Customer Care* 'hotlines' from shops to District Offices).

Mrs. Margaret Robinson, clerk, Amendments at North Wirral District Office. (To give more prominence to the importance of signing for supply).

Mr. Edward Green, switchboard operator, Mid-Mersey District. (To provide special telephone numbers for use by customers with accounts queries).

Miss Karen P. Williams, clerk, Computer Amendments at North Mersey District. (To provide more publicity to help customers with application-for-supply forms, and those who require final readings).

Mr. Henry Clarke, salesman, Kirkby shop. (To make provision for cashing rebate cheques at Board shops).

Everyone who put forward a *Customer Care* idea under the competition has received a personal letter of thanks and explanation from Mr. John Scudamore, chairman of the Customer Relations Working Group.

Mr. Scudamore told 'Contact':

'We were delighted to receive so many thoughtful and sincere suggestions. Some of the ideas put forward were already under consideration by the Customer Relations Working Group, while others were quite novel.'

'These suggestions have given us a lot of food for thought. Some seem suitable for implementation at a fairly early stage, while others fit in with experiments already being tried out in MANWEB.'

'We hope that some, at least, of those who have taken the trouble to put pen to paper will see some positive results for their efforts in the future.'

Calling Youth

The Prince's Trust

In 1975 H.R.H. The Prince of Wales announced in the House of Lords experimental schemes in certain areas in the United Kingdom to try and help young people. He wanted them to experience adventure, excitement and achievement through carrying out enterprises they had themselves devised and which would contribute to their own or other people's welfare and development. The experiments were very successful and consequently 'The Prince's Trust' was established as a registered charity in June 1976, with His Royal Highness as President.

The Trust has now been extended to Merseyside and a Regional Committee formed under the Chairmanship of the Chief Constable, Ken Oxford. The Secretary is George Eustance of the Merseyside Council for Voluntary Service.

The Committee are keen to receive applications

from any young person who considers that his ideas can be of benefit to those mentioned.

The amount of money available is limited, but it is essential that it is used, and it is there for you to use if you apply and your idea is considered suitable.

To summarise:

If you want to help yourself—If you want to help others . . . and have ideas on how you could do it—The Prince of Wales has set up a Trust to assist you to do what you want to do.

You don't have to be a member of a youth club or other organisation. You do have to be under the age of 25. There need not be a lot of you—you can apply on your own or with a few others.

If you want to apply—

- get your ideas worked out
- find out how much it will cost
- write down or tell us your plans, who you are, where you live, how old you are and the names of any others who want to share in your plans.

Write to the Secretary, The Prince's Trust, Merseyside Regional Committee, Inner Temple, Temple Lane, Liverpool L2 5RS.

Talking Notes

HOLIDAYS IN THE SNOW

WHILE the majority of people plump for their holidays in the middle months of the year and go for sandy beaches and blazing hot sun, some enthusiasts take time out-of-season and look for somewhere with plenty of snow for a skiing holiday.

It was just five years ago that **Marjorie Scregg** (energy sales demonstrator), North Wirral, and her husband Keith did just this and learned to ski in Switzerland. Since then they have become members of the Ski Club of Great Britain and have enjoyed skiing holidays in Austria and Italy as well as a return to Switzerland.

Earlier this year, while in Italy, Marjorie, as a pupil of the Scuola Italiana Sci Valfurva at

Santa Caterina, entered for the Downhill Slalom race and was successful in winning a bronze medal against some top-class opposition.

Marjorie joined the Board eleven years ago as a saleswoman in our Moreton shop. In 1972 she moved to our North Wirral District Office as an energy sales representative. She studied for three years at the Wallasey College of Further Education to gain

Left: Marjorie Scregg in her ski-gear and, below, with her prized Bronze Medal won in the Downhill Slalom race.



her City and Guilds in Home Economics. Marjorie took over her present job on 1st January this year.

Husband Keith is a specialist officer with the Social Services and their daughter Carol is in her second year of nurse training at Clatterbridge hospital.

Mind you! It's always handy to have a qualified nurse in the family when Mum and Dad are so keen on skiing!

Still going Strong

In a 'phone call to a member of staff at our North Wirral District office recently, a customer from Rock Ferry proudly announced that her set of Pyramid pans had been in constant use ever since she married just 50 years ago. "And they are still in excellent condition," she added.

It is quite possible that the pans were given as a free gift too, for in those days, in order to persuade customers to buy an electric cooker (*new fangled idea*), shops offered a free set of pans or an electric kettle.

Our congratulations on her golden wedding anniversary and we sincerely hope that our satisfied customer's pans will serve her for many more years to come.

Treasure Hunt

Unsociable weather did not deter members of our Aberystwyth Sports and Social Club from taking part in a Walking Treasure Hunt recently.

OUR COVER PICTURE shows the Mayor of Sefton, Councillor Eric Storey, during his recent visit to our North Mersey District office and depot at Bridle Road, Bootle. He met and talked to members of the staff and here we see him with the ladies of the Engineering clerical section who are, from left to right: Margaret Jones, Pauline McGregor, Kathy Johnson, Helen Crompton and Win Ambrose. Councillor Storey was accompanied on his tour by senior staff, pictured from left to right: George Shoesmith (District Administrative Officer), Dennis Noad (District Commercial Engineer), Albert Eyres (District Engineer) and Jim Barraclough (Group Manager).

(We thank Sefton Newspapers for their excellent photograph)

The route was mainly round the Town, beginning and ending at the Aberystwyth Town F.C. Social Club.

Jackie Lewis (clerk—General Services) as Vice-Chairman of the Club, presented prizes to the winners — **Mark Tracey** (Engineering clerical) and his partner, Linda Evans, who, incidentally, recently announced their engagement.

Booby prizes were awarded to **Geraint Howells** (Engineering clerical) and **Hywel Evans** (2nd engineer—Production).

Golden Days

Our congratulations go to **Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Andrews** of Southport who recently celebrated their golden wedding anniversary.

They were married on 6th July 1929 at Mornington Road Church, Southport and have lived in the town ever since.

Ron started his working life

with the former Southport Corporation way back in 1923. He joined MANWEB in 1948 and was principal assistant on Cash and Banking at Head Office when he retired in April 1969.

Lady Golfer Leaves

Having left her job as a clerical assistant in the Head Office Revenue section, **Maureen Lloyd-Jones** now wonders how she managed to fit her MANWEB work into her busy social schedule.

An all-round sportswoman, she has played tennis and hockey, but her interest now is centred on golf. A former member of the Welsh National team, Maureen serves on the Welsh Ladies Golfing Union Committee. She also plays for the Flintshire County team. She is also a member of the Hawarden and Holywell golf clubs.

We understand that she enjoys entertaining at home as

she is an excellent cook. In fact she is as good at cracking eggs and jokes as she is at cracking golf balls straight down the fairway.

Film Premier

Refrigeration is an integral part of the commercial catering chain. This fact is illustrated in The Electricity Council's new film, "Refrigeration Keeps" which was premiered in London last month.

The advantages of good refrigeration are seen through the mealtime activities of four members of a family, each having a different type of lunch on a certain working day.

"Refrigeration Keeps" shows the essential part that refrigeration has played in the preparation, presentation and subsequent enjoyment of the meals.

Car Rally

The acute shortage and high price of petrol made no difference to our colleagues in the North Mersey District Sports and Social Club when they held their annual Car Rally last month.

Bill Tubey and **Alec Smitton** (2nd engineers) organised the event and set the route and clues over a 36-mile course around the local countryside.

The first prize was won by

Behind a display of farewell gifts, some of the many friends of **Maureen Lloyd-Jones** (wearing dark belt) gather to wish her happiness in the future.



Paul Clare (electrician) with **John Ashton** (2nd engineer) in second place. Keeping the ladies in the picture was **Hilda Crompton** (Engineering clerical) who took third place.

For recording the best mileage, **Gordon Hughes** (inspection) was awarded a prize and **Margaret Jones** (Engineering clerical) had to raise a second mortgage to help with her petrol expenses!

Build Electric

On-the-spot assistance and advice on all aspects of electricity in buildings, with the emphasis on planning for energy management is now available from the new Build Electric Bureau in London.

Speaking at the official opening last month, Mr. Duncan McGrouther, Member of the Electricity Council, said that in an era when the wide use of energy is of vital importance, professional information and advice was an essential service.

The Build Electric Bureau is sited on the First Floor of the Building Centre at 26 Store Street, London WC1E 7BT. It is open on weekdays from 9.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. and on Saturdays from 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.

Advice is also available to telephone callers on 01-580 4986 or Freephone 2284.

Dee Valley Golf

The Vale of Llangollen golf course was the venue for the Dee Valley District Sports and Social Club Golfing Society's annual competition.

The trophy was won by **Brian Doyle** (System Engineer) with **Trevor Edwards** (1st engineer, Energy Sales) in second place. **Ieuan Evans** (1st engineer—System) took third place.

The best "First Nine" prize went to **Ken Edwards** (2nd engineer—System) with **Dennis**



On duty on the Board's stand at the Trade Fair, are Stuart Gates (energy sales representative, Mid-Mersey) and Margaret Boyle (temporary demonstrator).

Jones (material controller) taking the prize for the best "Last Nine."

The awards were presented by **John Young** (principal engineer-Planning) from Head Office.

All arrangements for this very successful competition were in the capable hands of Trevor Edwards and Dennis Jones.

Bridge Championships

This year, the electricity supply industry Swiss Team-of-Four Bridge Championships will be held at the Headquarters of the East Midlands Electricity Board at Arnold, Nottingham, on Saturday, 13th October.

If you are interested in competing against some 50 other teams from within our industry, you can get further details from H. M. Webber, Electricity Research Laboratories, Kelvin Avenue, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 7SE. 'Phone Leatherhead 74488.

Wanted Urgently

Docile trials bike of 250c.c. or 350 c.c. Suitable for 40-year-old, overweight novice. 'Phone: Oswestry 50710.

Pub Grub Exhibition

Keeping our name and service before the people who provide the food to go with the drink in pubs, clubs and restaurants, our Commercial colleagues from Mid-Mersey District and Head Office, put in some hard work at the Trade Fair organised by Greenall Whitley Brewery and held at the Lord Daresbury hotel near Warrington.

On our compact stand was a neat display of electric catering equipment with micro-wave ovens well to the fore.

Over the two-day period of the show, our staff endlessly explained to prospective customers how good food could be provided economically and effortlessly with electrical catering equipment.

Our charming girls, **Jane Fairclough** (Mid-Mersey) and **Margaret Boyle** (North Mersey) demonstrated "The Electric Menu."

Despite hard competition from other exhibitors, MAN-WEB staff made some very good sales and had many follow-up enquiries including one for a complete kitchen at £4,500!

Sarah Jane Appeal

Magnificent Efforts to Raise Cash

MANY of our readers will remember, no doubt, the tragedy which overtook the bright little girl Sarah Jane Williams who suffered brain damage following an operation. It was a disastrous blow to her mother Joyce and father Terry, our Oswestry shop supervisor.

The former Mayor of Oswestry, Councillor H. T. Williams immediately set up a fund to help meet the expense involved in sending Sarah Jane to a clinic in Philadelphia. Here, brain specialists will examine her before working out a planned programme of treatment.

MANWEB staff in Oswestry District organised their own committee to handle cash-raising activities in support of the Mayor's Fund, and in a very short time they have raised over £2,000.

The 'Super Raffle' spread throughout the Board brought in over £1,100 after deduction of the prize money and licence fee. A local printer kindly supplied the tickets free of charge.

In addition to selling their share of the raffle tickets, friends from our Mid-Cheshire District put in some very hard work organising fund-raising activities which included a grand 'Bring and Buy Sale.' As a result, they were able to present the committee with a cheque for £500!

Bringing all the MANWEB efforts to a close, the world-famous Rhos Male Voice Choir, with guest soloists Alma Perry (*wife of a staff member*) and Glynn Thomas, both members of Clwyd Opera, gave a magnificent charity concert in St. Oswald's parish church, Oswestry.

It is gratifying to know—once again—that members of the Board's staff, and their families and friends, were so quick to respond to the appeal for cash to help little Sarah Jane in this special "Year of The Child."

With the Mayor's Fund now officially closed, over £20,000 has been raised. This, at least, will take the financial worry from Terry and Joyce.

Our prayers and hopes for success go with them in October when they take Sarah Jane to see the doctors in Philadelphia.

Representatives from all over the Board's area were present when The Mayor of Oswestry, Councillor Geraint Pritchard drew the winning ticket for the £100 prize in the 'Super Raffle.' *Standing, left foreground, is Councillor H. T. Williams, the former Mayor who set up the appeal fund, and centre, is Lyn Price, Chairman of the Oswestry District Fund-Raising Committee. Standing, extreme right, is Sarah Jane's father—Terry Williams.*

(Picture—Border Counties Advertiser)





Fund Committee secretary, Sid Warburton, *second from left*, welcomes Colin Jones, conductor of the Rhos Male Voice Choir, prior to the concert in Oswestry parish church. Also in the picture are, Ern Preston, *left*, who compered the show, Alma Perry and Glynne Thomas the guest soloists, and, *in the background*, members of the famous choir.

(Picture—Border Counties Advertiser)

LETTER FROM AMERICA

A Few Dollars More

Cash for the 'Sarah Jane Appeal' flowed in from all over the Board's area and, in one instance, from as far away as Port Charlotte, Florida in the good old USA. Mrs. Rhiannon Moss wrote to say that she had read in 'Contact' of Sarah Jane's plight and would like to help. She enclosed three dollars for a book of raffle tickets with instructions that, if she won the prize, then it should be put directly into the Fund. She also sent an additional ten dollars for Terry and his wife Joyce.

Rhiannon is the widow of Tom Moss who was a storekeeper and later a clerk at our Pwllheli depot prior to his early death at the age of 51 just eight years ago.

Thanks for keeping in touch Rhiannon. We all wish you every happiness.

OSWESTRY DISTRICT FUND-RAISING COMMITTEE

Chairman—Mr. Lyn Price

Treasurer—

Mr. Tegwyn Williams

Secretary—

Mr. Sid Warburton

Members—

Mr. Jim Brierley

Mrs. Pat Mortimer

Mr. Dick Owen



Winner of the £100 prize in the 'Super Raffle,' Freda Clark, a chargehand cleaner at our Dee Valley District office. Freda is the wife of Albert Clark, a former stock-checker prior to his retirement.

Representing Mid-Cheshire District staff, these two charming ladies presented gifts for Sarah Jane and a £500 cheque for the Appeal Fund. Helen Aston, *left*, works in the Customer Liaison section and her companion, Mavis Stubbs is from the Records section.



The need for nuclear power

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Nine nuclear power stations produce one eighth of the electricity used in England and Wales. Three more stations are in an advanced state of construction and work on another is to start shortly. When completed and in operation about one fifth of our electricity will be generated from nuclear power. This article answers some of the questions which are being asked about the desirability of continuing to build nuclear power stations in this country.

Why build another nuclear power station now, when there is already a large surplus of generating capacity in England and Wales?

It takes about ten years from the start of site work to the full commissioning of a new power station. The latest station is not needed today, but it will be in the late 1980's because the demand for electricity is increasing and some of our older less efficient power stations will have to be taken out of service.

But what about the present surplus?

This is really a myth. We have little more than enough generating capacity to meet peak demands

and allow for plant being out of service because of random breakdowns. At present, we have a 28 per cent planning margin which will be maintained up to 1985 by the generating plant now under construction.

How can you be sure the demand for electricity will increase?

No forecast for eight to ten years ahead can be precise. We study in detail developments in various sectors—domestic, industrial, commercial and agricultural—and take note of Government's plans for economic growth. At the same time, we must be ready to meet any increase in

demand which may result from a rapid upturn in the economy.

Why not build coal fired stations?

We are doing so. In fact, the electricity supply industry is the National Coal Board's biggest customer, taking about half its total output, some 70 million tonnes a year. We cannot generate all our electricity from coal, and our oil and gas resources are finite.

Then why not concentrate on natural renewable sources of energy such as solar, wind, waves and tides?

The natural renewable sources of energy are possible alternatives to fossil fuel or to nuclear power and the UK electricity industry is participating in studies and development of some of these sources. In general it can be said that the feasibility of solar heating wind and tidal power has been established, but these are likely to contribute only a few per cent of the country's requirements by the end of the century.

But why nuclear power?

The only established technology capable of substituting for our failing resources of oil and gas is nuclear power. No credible alternative exists.

But is nuclear power safe? What if a nuclear power station explodes?

A nuclear power station is one of the most thoroughly engineered devices yet produced. Safety analyses are conducted in very great depth and it should be noted that no fatalities have occurred in the 25 years of nuclear power generation. It is simply not possible for a nuclear power station to explode like a nuclear bomb, although much of the public concern stems from the early military use of nuclear power and from the widespread confusion between nuclear weapons and nuclear electrical power.

What about radioactivity escaping from a nuclear power station? Isn't it dangerous to live near one?

The amounts of radioactivity emitted from nuclear power stations are extremely small, and certainly much less than you encounter in other ways. For example, the average background radiation level is about 100 radiation units a year, or 150 units a year if you live in a granite house in Aberdeen. Compared with these figures, the additional radiation received on average by a person living near a nuclear power station varies from less than one half to less than one-twentieth of the average background radiation level. So you can see that living near a nuclear power station is not very different from moving from one part of the country to another.

What if there is an accident at a nuclear power station with a resultant release of radioactivity?

Such an accident is extremely unlikely in Britain because of the numerous protective measures and safeguards embodied in the design, construction and operation of our nuclear plant. More than 200 reactor years of experience have been accumulated without observable injury to anyone. The chance of death from a nuclear accident has been estimated to be less than one-in-a-million even to those living near a nuclear power station.

What happens to nuclear fuel after it has been used in a power station?

It is transported to a reprocessing plant at Windscale, in Cumbria, as it has been for the past twenty years.

How is spent fuel transported? Is it safe?

The fuel elements are radioactive but are completely safe if handled correctly. They are kept in water at the power station, to keep them cool, and then loaded into massive steel containers which can withstand high temperatures and severe impact without leakage. The steel containers are carefully

transported by road and rail to Windscale.

Could terrorists make a nuclear bomb with radioactive fuel from nuclear power stations?

Immense technical problems make it virtually impossible to make a nuclear bomb from reactor fuel. It would need to be processed in a multi-million pound highly specialised plant, which would be difficult to keep secret, and would involve substantial hazards to would-be terrorists.

What happens to the radioactive fuel at Windscale?

It is processed into three main parts.

Uranium	97 per cent
Plutonium	0.5 per cent
Fission Products	2.5 per cent

The uranium and plutonium can be used to manufacture fresh fuel. This is a particularly attractive proposition if plutonium is used as fuel in fast reactors where some sixty times

(continued overleaf)

THE CHAIRMAN COMMENTS

Board Chairman Ben Hastings, speaking to reporters at a Press Conference called to present our Annual Report and Accounts, had this to say on the subject of nuclear power—

During recent years the electricity industry has repeatedly warned that there must be an expansion of our nuclear generating capacity to bridge the coming gap between the rising demand for energy and our dwindling reserves of fossil fuels.

It seems that the leaders of the developed nations who met recently in Tokio share that view.

There exist, however, pressure groups and individuals who miss no opportunity to oppose and attack any proposal for the further development of nuclear power. In the process some of them deliberately set out to foster fear and misunderstanding in the minds of the public.

Our customers should remember that nuclear power is already an indispensable element in our electricity supply, that nuclear electricity is cheaper than that produced by burning coal or oil, and that the safety record of our present nuclear power stations is beyond criticism.

Every year men lose their lives in coal mines or on oil rigs, but no one has been killed by a nuclear accident at a British power station.

The incident at the Harrisburg nuclear power station in the USA was a major accident, but it was not a major, or even a minor, disaster. No lives were lost, and the technical expertise available was able to control the situation.

The lessons learned will no doubt lead to further improvements in safety precautions. Concern about nuclear safety is right and proper and deserves the fullest possible public debate, but the public should not allow themselves to be misled by those who beat the drum of anti-nuclear propaganda, often for the least worthy of motives.

If these people have their way our grandchildren will almost certainly face a chronic energy shortage, which will bring in its train a stagnating economy and falling living standards.

The Chairman's comments attracted wide publicity, including interviews on HTV at peak viewing time the same day and on Radio Merseyside and Radio City.

SENIOR APPOINTMENT



Mr. Frederick E. Brooker has been appointed to the position of Assistant Chief Engineer—Technical to succeed Dr. James M. Cowan who retires this month.

Mr. Brooker, a native of Matlock in Derbyshire, studied for his degree in electrical engineering at the Manchester College of Technology (now UMIST).

From there he went to work for Ferguson Pailin Ltd. in Manchester. In 1952 he joined MANWEB as senior assistant engineer at the Board's Head Office, at that time based in Liverpool.

He was a Principal Engineer in the Technical Department prior to taking up his new appointment. Mr. Brooker's main outside interests are motor cars and music and, with his wife Beatrice, he enjoys walking holidays.

SOME SHORT NOTES

From a Thingwall (Wirral) customer, to North Wirral District—

"I wish to express my thanks to the MANWEB branch at Pensby Road, Heswall. The manager in particular went out of his way to get me exactly what I wanted in the way of a cooker . . . I was so pleased, I was wishing I needed to buy something else!"

Perhaps he will—thanks to supervisor Peter Hunt and his staff!

* * *

An affectionate Dee Valley customer, posting an account and payment through the letter-box at Wrexham shop, endorsed the back of the envelope "MANWEB, with love."

* * *

Another strange missive—this time through the letter-box at Moreton shop, from one of our last-minute payers, bore the following note on the envelope—

"Dawn,

Could you please hand in this reminder notice, cheque and letter in to MANWEB shop in 'Cross', or they'll be cutting my Elec off. It was a bit of an oversight (that's my excuse and I'm sticking to it) . . . actually it was Dozy Delia . . . typical woman . . . you're all the same . . . only kidding . . ."

We hope that 'Dozy Delia' isn't looking for the writer with a hatchet after this publication!

NUCLEAR POWER

—continued from page 157

as much energy can be extracted from the uranium compared to the reactors of today. Reprocessing is therefore a necessary energy conservation measure and offers security of energy supplies in the future.

What about the highly radioactive fission products?

Perhaps the most important point is that the amounts involved are so small. For example, if a man's total energy requirements for his entire lifetime were met from nuclear energy then in glassified form the active nuclear waste would literally amount to a handful.

But what happens to this waste?

At present the waste is stored in liquid form in steel clad tanks at Windscale. Because the amounts involved are so small, there is no great rush to decide what to do with this waste in the long term. It seems likely that it will be glassified, placed in stainless steel containers, and stored either deep underground or in the ocean depths.

Isn't this a threat to future generations? After all it's lethal for millions of years.

No. The major part of the active

waste loses its radioactivity within 500 to 1,000 years. A very small proportion of highly active elements have longer lives, perhaps a million years or more. If this residual activity reached human environment it would be only a fraction of natural radiation levels. To get this question into perspective, look at other forms of poison such as arsenic, or mercury or cyanide. They never decay. They last for ever.

What happens to the radioactive parts of a nuclear power station when it finally closes down?

It is possible to demolish a disused nuclear power station completely and it has been done in the USA. A simpler way, reducing the exposure of the demolition workers to radiation, is to seal off the more active parts of the reactor for about 50 years, during which time most of the radioactivity would decay to a safe level.

Is nuclear power really economic?

Yes. Including capital charges and decommissioning costs, nuclear generation of electricity is cheaper than generation by coal or oil. It is expected that it will continue to be cheaper in the years ahead, and that the gap will widen as fuel prices increase.

FIRE!

Demonstration of Fire Fighting Equipment at Chester

The fire warden at Head Office attended a film show, a short talk and a question and answer session, presented by Mr. John Spence of General Fire Appliances Ltd., the manufacturers of fire fighting equipment. The Company then provided a demonstration of the correct use of the different types of portable extinguisher which are sited in Board Offices, to deal with various kinds of fires. One important aspect of the demonstration was that fire warden were able to handle the fire extinguishers for themselves.



Above: Dealing with a wood fabric fire using two-gallon water extinguishers are Dave Ollier, John Jones and Bill Sleddon. Below left: Reg Newcombe with an extinguisher designed for electrical fires. Below right: Ron Sand uses a dry powder appliance to put out an inflammable liquid fire.



Below left: Keith Spence smothers a highly inflammable liquid using a foam extinguisher—ideal for fat fires.

Below right: The Ladies too get used to the multipurpose toxic extinguisher. Carol Sankey uses one to deprive the fire of oxygen with the special ICI gas. This model is ideal in the home and in the car.





A most unusual farewell present—a Shih Tzu puppy—was the retirement gift from friends and colleagues seen here being handed over to Mrs. Dot Elbourne by Mr. Colin Leonard.

RETIREMENTS

Mrs. D. ELBOURNE

Bidding farewell to his secretary, Mrs. Dorothy Elbourne, Management Services Controller Mr. Colin Leonard, presented her with a burglar alarm on behalf of her colleagues. This was a very special burglar alarm, a pedigree 'Shih Tzu' puppy called Chang. His ancestors decorated silk cushions in the Emperors Palace in Peking for centuries.

Dot Elbourne joined MANWEB in 1963 as a shorthand typist and has worked as a private secretary to several of the Board's management team.

Gardening and ballroom dancing are the two pastimes which Dot will enjoy in her retirement.

Mr. J. T. BOLTON

After 48 years' service to the electricity industry, Mr. Joe Bolton (*2nd engineer, Operations*) retired from his job in the Network Reporting Centre at Head Office.

He joined the industry as a 'lamp' lad with Chester Corporation, cleaning and switching-on street lamps in the City. He graduated to working on Chester's illuminations, decorative lighting on the river front, the bridges and some launches.

With the outbreak of war in 1939 he joined the RAF and despite suffering the loss of a leg in 1940 served until 1946. He then returned to civilian life as a shift engineer at Crane Street, Chester. He remained there until 1970 when he became a member of the Network Reporting Centre staff.

Joe has overcome the problems associated with his disability and tends his garden, paints and decorates the house, clears away snow and repairs his car, he also enjoys caravanning and canoeing. He is the secretary of the local branch of the British Limbless Ex-Servicemen's Association, and has championed the cause of many disabled people in the area.

He shares with his wife, Bette, an interest in the Chester Theatre Club—he attends to the stage lighting and she is the wardrobe mistress.

They have two sons, both of whom are married, one to Liz Bolton who is a clerical assistant in the Accounts section at Sealand Road.

A packed Network Reporting Centre on the occasion of the retirement ceremony held for Mr. Joe Bolton, centre, and Mrs. Bolton, holding flowers. Mr. Dennis Farquhar (*Assistant Chief Engineer-System Management*) front right, made gift presentations on behalf of colleagues.



Mr. Steve Airey, centre left, says his goodbyes to Mr. Warwick Saunders (Appliance Marketing Manager) and some of his Commercial colleagues.



Mr. S. AIREY

Marketing Services Officer Mr. Steve Airey retired from the Board after 25 years' service. Based at Sealand Road, he was responsible for advising on the selection of appliances that the MANWEB shops sold.

Very much the 'travelling electric salesman' he held various sales posts in the South Wales, South Western, Midland and Eastern Electricity Boards, before rejoining MANWEB as a Principal Assistant—Sales, in the former Area 1 in Liverpool, in 1965.

With re-organisation he became one of the three sales controllers, responsible for a group of Board shops. More recently he took up the position from which he has now retired.

Away from the office Steve is a family man, and member of the Royal Naval Auxiliary Reserve; he heads the land-based unit at Llandudno. Retirement will mean he is able to spend much more time on Navy business and taking care of his bees, for he is also an apiarist, so it looks like a very busy time ahead.

Mr. J. F. CHAMBERLAIN

Taking advantage of the Board's early retirement scheme, Mr. Frank Chamberlain vacated his position as 1st engineer in the Head Office Technical Drawing Office, after 47 years' service in the industry.

He started his career in Warrington power station as a draughtsman. With nationalisation he joined MANWEB, and became chief draughtsman in the former Sub-Area 2. He was responsible for setting up a drawing office organisation in the Districts of that Sub-Area.

On the amalgamation of two former Areas, Frank became Area 2/3 chief draughtsman at Chester, moving over to join Head Office staff on re-organisation ten years ago.

Frank is married, and he and his wife have two children, a son and a daughter, both of whom are married, David who lives in Canada and Denise who has presented Frank with his first grandchild, a boy.

He numbers snooker and bowls among his hobbies, and he is a keen sea angler. He also has a reputation as a story teller.

Mr. Stan Roberts (Assistant Chief Engineer—Plant and Construction), front right, has a farewell handshake for Mr. Frank Chamberlain on the occasion of his retirement. Also in the centre of the picture we see Mrs. Chamberlain and Mr. Dennis Hughes (Chief Draughtsman).





Popular Miss Barbara Black, 4th from right, with just a few of her many friends at her retirement ceremony. (Note: Even in his retirement, Tommy Dutton (3rd from right) is back in 'Contact').

Miss B. BLACK

Sharing in the farewell gathering and buffet with Charlie Upton—was Miss Barbara Black, who was retiring. In fact the canteen ladies made it a memorable occasion with two retirement cakes—blue for a boy, and pink for a girl.

Barbara began her working life with the former Southport Corporation Civil Defence Department in 1939—officially as a shorthand typist, but also disinfecting and issuing gas masks! She moved to the electricity department in 1948, joining MANWEB on nationalisation. Over the years her work involved meter records, wages, time sheets and personnel.

Among her many interests are Scottish country dancing and walking, and she has a distinguished four-footed neighbour in the person of Red Rum, who is frequently seen taking his morning exercise. In fact he has even contributed to the beauty of her rose garden!

Friends and colleagues presented Barbara with many gifts, and their good wishes for a long and happy retirement.

Mr. C. UPTON

Another long-serving electricity supply stalwart in Liverpool, in the person of Mr. Charles Upton, has retired.

Charlie started with the former Liverpool Corporation way back in 1933, and his pre-war membership of the Territorial Army saw to it that he became a full-time soldier in the Royal Artillery in August 1939.

Service in France, the Western Desert, and Greece followed, before he was taken prisoner in Crete in 1941.

After four years as a PoW he returned to Hatton Garden in 1946, later moving to Marsh Lane and Bridle Road, where he was in charge of the North Mersey District Drawing Office.

Charlie, who was a very popular character, received many gifts from his friends, who joined him for drinks and a splendid buffet (*laid on by the canteen ladies*) in the Sports and Social Club. His retirement plans include redecorating his house, and having the best garden in Maghull!

Friends and colleagues of Mr. Charles Upton, centre right, gather round at his farewell ceremony as Mr. Albert Eyres (District Engineer) wishes him a long and happy retirement.



A clean desk, an empty OUT tray and a big smile from Miss Josie Grice as Mr. Dennis Hodgetts drinks to her health and happiness in retirement,



Miss J. GRICE

After 30 years' service to the industry Miss Josie Grice retired from Mid-Mersey District recently, when Dennis Hodgetts (*District Administrative Officer*) presented her with a collection of gifts from her many friends.

Josie began her career at "Eversley," the former Area 2 accounts office, but travelled through Head

Office, and the former St. Helens District office before completing her service at Warrington.

In retirement she will find more time to devote to competitions (which have proved most rewarding), and to browsing round antique shops and flea markets. Her friends wish her good health and good hunting!

Mr. T. E. DAVIES

A substation attendant with Clwyd District, Mr. Eric Davies, retired recently after 23 years' service.

Eric had formerly worked as a chargehand on cable-laying operations, and also as a 33kV linesman. During his service he was an active trade unionist, serving as a shop steward with the EEPTU. In retirement he will be able to devote more time to his golf.

On behalf of his many friends he was presented with a golf trolley by Mr. I. W. Morris (*Production Engineer*).

Mr. T. R. JONES

After 45 years' service with the industry in North Wales Mr. Rodney Jones (*2nd engineer—Contracting*) with Clwyd District, has retired.

When he started work, with the Trefriw Electric Light Company in 1934, his working hours on the afternoon shift were governed by a rather unusual factor. He had to stay on duty until the load on the

generator fell to 10 amps—after which he could switch over to the batteries and go home!

After moving into the "big time," with the North Wales Power Company, Rodney served with the RAF during the war. Suffering from toothache on one occasion he munched a whole box of aspirins, and swears that he woke up just as he was being

covered with a Union Jack and a Welsh Dragon while the padre officiated!

After the war he joined MAN-WEB at Llandudno as a consumers' engineer, later moving to Clwyd District office. On behalf of his many friends he was presented with a portable TV, while for Mrs. Jones there was a beautiful bouquet of flowers.

The sign in the background sums up the occasion for Mr. Rodney Jones, centre, as he receives his retirement card from Mr. Ken Appleton (*District Commercial Engineer*). Mrs. Jones was presented with a bouquet by Miss Diane Morgan.





Mrs. G. FREEMAN

After many years as a clerk in our Liverpool District, a happy and very popular Mrs. Gert Freeman has now retired. She is seen, above, holding a bouquet of flowers, with some of her friends in the Customer Accounting section who gave her a memorable farewell by subscribing to present her with parting gifts and wish her a long and happy retirement.



A parting handshake from Dennis Hughes (Chief Draughtsman) to Mrs. Joan Gwyther.

Mrs. J. GWYTHYR

A tracer in the Head Office Technical Drawing Office, Mrs. Joan Gwyther has retired from the Board after nearly 29 years' service.

She has worked in Chester for all of those years, initially in the Newgate Street Office and later at District Office and Head Office.

Joan and her husband, Arnold, share an interest in music. She sings in a church choir, while he is an accomplished organist.

CLARENCE DOCK MEMORIES

Reading a report in 'Contact' that Clarence Dock power station had reached the end of its useful service prompted former colleague Mr. Tom Coates to drop us a line.

He informs us that the original chimneys at 'The Dock' were made of stainless steel, but these only lasted a couple of years and had to be replaced by the present concrete chimneys.

"The foundation for these was so good that excavation was only 18 inches to support a chimney 335 feet high and 20 feet minimum internal diameter. I suppose that I am one of the few people who has walked around the top coping," he writes, "but not again, thank you!"

Mr. Thomas Coates was a former Deputy City Electrical Engineer for Liverpool and an ex-Manager of MANWEB's No. 3 Sub-Area.

He is now living in retirement at Saxmundham, Suffolk.

Still Serving

One of our pensioners, former meter reader Allan Littlemore of Northwich, writes to tell us that he is still very active in retirement and serves as a member of Acton Bridge Parish Council. In the recent elections he came out top of the poll from a list of ten candidates for eight seats.

He also informs us of another retired colleague from Northwich depot, Danny Hill, who is a member of Moulton Parish Council.

Even in retirement, MANWEB staff continue to serve the public.

STAFF CONFERENCES

- North Mersey—Friday, 12th October. District Office
- Liverpool —Thursday, 18th October. Dovedale Towers
- Mid-Mersey —Friday, 19th October. Wilderspool Centre
- Dee Valley —Tuesday, 23rd October. Bryn Howell, Llangollen
- North Wirral —Date to be arranged in 1980
- Mid-Cheshire —Thursday, 18th October. Alverston Hall
- Clwyd —Friday, 2nd November. Derbyshire Miners Home
- Gwynedd —Friday, 9th November. Royal Hotel, Caernarfon
- Oswestry —Friday, 28th September. Pedigree Hotel
- Aberystwyth —Date to be arranged in 1980
- Head Office —Thursday, 1st November. Head Office

ELECTRICITY INDUSTRY PENSIONERS—If you would like to attend any of these LAC Staff Conferences, please write to the Administrative Officer of the District concerned requesting an invitation.