

TONE



WINTER 1956

The Magazine of AUTOMATIC TELEPHONE & ELECTRIC CO LTD

TONE

THE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF
AUTOMATIC TELEPHONE & ELECTRIC CO LTD

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The enchanted island

Caldey Island is a pearl from an industrial oyster. After the slag heaps, blast furnaces and sombre towns of South Wales, the tiny smudge off Pembroke's rocky coast is not far removed from Paradise. Enchanting scenery, scent-laden air and the tranquil, reverent atmosphere of some lovely English cathedral make Caldey the perfect summer retreat from a brassy outside world.

No piers, no picture houses, no pubs, no bathing machines, no trams, trains, buses or even real roads desecrate the beauty of this almost Mediterranean spot. Just six miles in circumference, the island is a natural breakwater for quaint old Tenby three miles away on the mainland.

In wintertime, however, the gem of Caldey displays one serious flaw. That short stretch of water between the island and the Welsh coast is torn into frequent furies by Atlantic gales, and contact with the mainland is disrupted for three or four days at a time.

The inhabitants of Caldey—some thirty or forty Cistercian monks, a small haul of fisherfolk and the keepers of the island lighthouse—are dependent on fast tip-and-run launches to overcome this isolation and to assist with their economy.

Now, the monastery of the White Benedictines, the Abbey of Our Lady and St. Samson, is the hub of the island's life. Intermittently, monks have lived on Caldey for more than fourteen hundred years and they have nearly always been self-supporting—tilling fields, tending cattle, pigs and poultry, making perfumes and trading on the mainland. They lead a simple, hard-working life and one would think them very remote from modern ideas. Not so, however. They believe in keeping in touch with up-to-date developments



WORK AND PRAY *A group of Cistercian monks return to their monastery on Caldey Island. Their lives are spent in prayer and toil and the community includes many different nationalities and skills*

and they have installed many of the latest laundry and kitchen aids, drills, lathes, pumps, lighting and their own efficient electrical plant. They also own a 30-foot, ten-ton motor launch in which they ferry dairy produce and other goods to the mainland.

Recently, the monastery became one of A. T. & E.'s most interesting customers when the monks decided to install a private automatic exchange, built at Strowger Works. A VHF radio system is also to be installed.

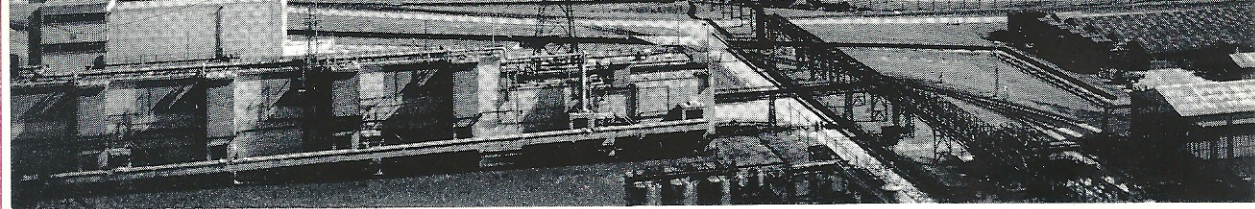
The five-watt A.M. VHF radio unit is being set up at a central point on the island and two walkie-talkie sets provided, one to be retained in the monks' own motor launch and the other to be held by the person responsible for arranging the transit of stores, produce and passengers. An up-to-the-minute check will now be kept on the tricky local weather conditions. Our PAX provides a ready means of communication to

selected points on the island, co-ordination in the transit of produce over the rough roads, assembly of working parties on the small quay and quick action in cases of emergency.

A link between the two systems has been introduced and users of the walkie-talkie equipment can speak direct to designated persons over the PAX land lines and vice versa.

A couple of years ago, A. T. & E. provided a short-range VHF radio-telephone link between Caldey and the mainland. The equipment was the first of its kind used by the British Post Office and its use has since been extended to many other islands around our coasts — islands that would otherwise be isolated during stormy weather.

Thus, Caldey Island, with its origins going back to the Ice Age, and its colourful history including visits from both fierce Norse raiders and gentle Welsh saints, is up-to-the-minute in many respects and far better equipped to face the future.



AN INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION *began amid these lovely hills. This is the new atom-powered plant at Calder Hall, Cumberland. A second generating station is scheduled to come into operation next year*

ATOMS in harness

✧ Centuries separate Caldey Island from Calder Hall. We turn now from the past to the start of a new era. From the monastic peace of a tiny Welsh island we move to an English county that has just witnessed the start of an industrial revolution. Britain's first atomic power station at Calder Hall in Cumberland, officially opened by the Queen recently, is giving an exciting lead to the rest of the world, and A.T. & E. equipment is playing a vital part in this project.

✧ The new station, which produces electric power, not from burning coal or oil, but from nuclear fission, is equipped with a system of direct wire control designed and manufactured by the Power Signalling Division of the Company at our City Factory.

✧ Switchgear associated with the Calder "A" generating station—as the new project is officially known—is controlled from a central point by

means of this system. Among other functions, it provides indication of alarm conditions, remote instrument readings, and the control and indication of the main transformer tapplings for voltage variations.

The system has to operate equipment scattered over distances of more than 1,000 yards, and over two miles of multicore cable were used in local wiring alone. In the plant's control room, switchboards manufactured by our Company extend to some 30 feet and have been designed to line up exactly with boards made by other companies engaged on the project. Over 200 drawings were required for this work and the project was engineered and installed to schedule in about 18 months.

A similar system is at present being manufactured for Calder "B"—a second generating plant—which is scheduled to come into operation early next year. The United States and Russia have already demonstrated the possibilities of nuclear power by generating electricity in experi-

mental plants and the United States Navy has an atomic-driven submarine, but Calder Hall is the first plant to operate on a truly industrial scale.

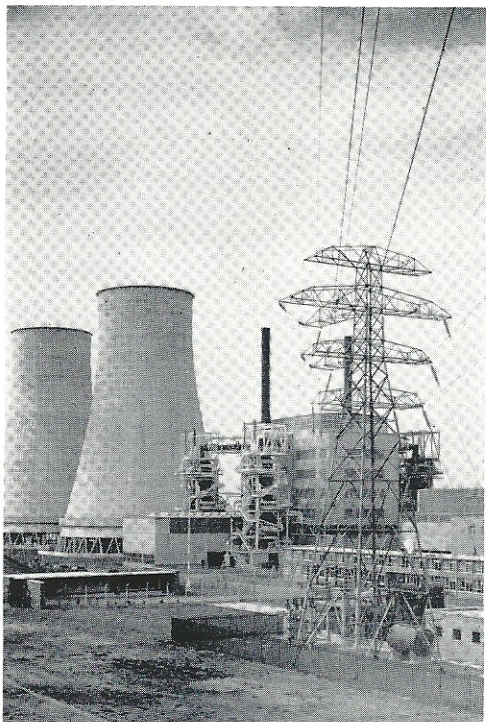
Calder Hall will be followed by more advanced and more potent stations. Within ten or fifteen years the nation's nuclear power programme may have reached the point at which every new station is nuclear. It is expected that atomic power will be contributing 1,500 to 2,000 megawatts of electricity to the grid and replacing five to six million tons of coal a year by a few hundred tons of uranium. Estimated cost of the present ten-year programme is £300,000,000—yes, three hundred million pounds sterling.

All this is going to mean increasing demands on the remainder of industry—for materials of extreme purity, for equipment of great complexity, and so on. These demands can, and will, be met and the lessons learnt are sure to lead to important scientific and engineering achievements.

What an exciting age has opened up for Great Britain and the world!



ROYAL OCCASION *The new plant was officially opened by the Queen who inspected installations*



OUR EQUIPMENT *helps control the flow of power into the grid. On the left are giant cooling towers*

Thirty years of laughter

The sad-eyed little man in the cloth cap looks even smaller than he really is against a background of huge packing cases in our Despatch Department. But don't be misled by physical size. Jimmy Motler, professional clown, acrobat, juggler, weight-lifter, comedian and wrestler, has a tall reputation after thirty years in the entertainment business.

Jimmy is playing a resident season in Department 30, but it isn't long since he was appearing in variety, revue, pantomime, cabaret, circus, on ice and on television. The former butcher's boy from Wigan is happy enough working five days a week in a factory, but he often thinks wistfully about those star-spangled nights in the good old music hall.

Chat with him and he'll recall with pride his appearances on bills along with most of the big names of yesterday and today . . . Sophie Tucker, Florrie Ford, Nellie Wallace, George Roby, Will Fyffe, Harry Lauder, George Formby, Junr., Wee Georgie Wood, Randolph Sutton, Tom Mix, Max Miller, Jack Hylton, Ben Lyon and Bebe Daniels, Max Wall, Dave Morris, Billy Cotton, Fred Emney, Eve Boswell, Eric Barker, Dave King and a host of others.

In his teens, Jimmy was a free-style wrestler and weight-lifter. His interest in theatricals began when he teamed up with another Wigan lad in a strong-man act called Les Terrianos. Their first engagement, he remembers, was in a tin-roofed theatre at Northwich. The act was a success and Jimmy and his pal went on tour.

Romance came on the programme during a show in Barnsley. It was here that Jimmy met his wife,



RECOGNISE HIM? *He's the laughing clown on the front cover of this issue. Jimmy Motler is his name*



JUGGLING *was part of Jimmy's act in his music hall days. His son, David, carries on the tradition*



COMEDY has always attracted him, however, and he still goes entertaining at local social clubs

Barney (real name Norah). By the time the show reached South Shields, it was Mr. and Mrs. Motler and they had their own juggling act. Their only son, David, at the age of twelve, picked up enough of his parents' professional skill to go on the boards alone.

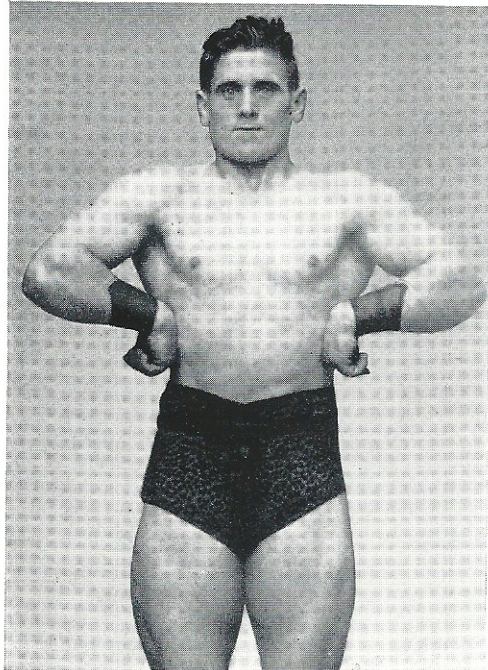
In later years, father and son ran a double act. Dad clowned while the boy juggled riding a unicycle. Then, one day—on Dad's birthday—David received his call-up papers and the act had to fold. Dad returned to his home in Meliden Road, Edge Lane, Liverpool, and took his present job with A.T. & E. David went into the Royal Corps of Signals at Catterick Camp and Mum became an ordinary housewife.

When David comes out of the Army shortly, will Dad go back to slapstick, red noses and tights? "At 52, I may be getting a bit past it," he says ruefully, "although I still do a spot of clowning in my spare time, you know. My boy will probably carry on alone, however."

And just to show that his old theatrical skills are still there, Jimmy Motler laughingly dug out his grease paints and made up for our cover picture. The world of the factory was forgotten and, for one exciting hour, the little clown was back again in the glitter of the circus spotlight.



AT WORK Jimmy has little time to spare, but willingly poses for a picture amid the packing cases



IN HIS YOUTH he toured the country in a strong-man act. There's nothing phoney about those muscles



Super tug uses our radio equipment

Sabre calling

Although the Manchester Ship Canal has not been getting as much publicity recently as the one over which Nasser caused his little spot of bother, an important event in the history of the 62-year-old waterway, which connects the City of Manchester with the sea, took place recently.

While the world was watching the comings and goings at Suez, a revolutionary new "super" tug took to the murky waters of the ship canal. What is so special about a new tug? For the answer to that you must ask her 51-year-old skipper, Captain Robert Blythe. "She's a fine job and will turn on a penny," he will tell you.

There may well be a little "nautical licence" in this statement, but nevertheless her hydroconic construction, coupled with twin-rudder steering, gives her a remarkable manoeuvrability few can equal.

But the second reason, perhaps, why the *Sabre*, as the new tug is known, can claim to be outstanding, is the fact that she is fitted with VHF radio-telephone equipment supplied by our company.

The equipment enables her to keep in touch with shore stations while navigating the entire



TUG SKIPPER *Captain Blythe uses our radio-telephone equipment from the bridge of his vessel*

length of the 35-mile stretch of waterway, as well as in the docks beyond, thus adding to all-round safety and efficiency. For, like Suez, navigation along the Ship Canal has its own special problems. There are some five locks to be negotiated, not to mention several swing-bridges, and the famous Barton Swing Aqueduct.

Add to this the fact that if two large vessels approach each other from opposite directions there is the awkward task of shunting one of them into special "laybys" to let the other pass, and you have some idea of what tug crews and pilots have to contend with.

Although the yearly traffic of about 13 million tons does not compare with the amount passed by that other canal, it is nevertheless a considerable figure.

With these problems in mind, the Manchester Ship Canal Company some years ago called upon A.T. & E. to provide a comprehensive VHF radio-telephone network linking their three main shore stations at Eastham locks, Latchford locks and Manchester, with tugs and other vessels under their control.

The three shore stations are linked by landline telephone so that ship movements are carefully controlled at all stages of their passage through the canal. In addition to the fixed radio equipment, portable transmitter/receiver sets—similar to those designed for pilots of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board—are also available for use in emergencies. Loud-hailer units—essential for any tug's daily operation—have been incorporated into the VHF equipment to give an audio output of 10 watts.

Sabre is the first of four new tugs ordered by the Manchester Ship Canal Company. All are far in advance of anything at present afloat. But one revolutionary feature that "old salts" may find hard to swallow is that the funnel has been dispensed with in order to give the captain unobstructed all-round vision. The centrally heated crew quarters may also come hard to sailors of the "old school." You can almost hear them mumbling: "Things have changed since our day. We were tough sailors then and didn't need new-fangled things like radio-telephones . . ."



ONE OF THE FLEET *The tug Onward hastens to escort another vessel along the important inland waterway that links the city of Manchester with the port and docks of Liverpool on the Mersey*

We'd like you to meet...

Jack Greenbank, Department 132, Strowger Works, handles nothing heavier than relays during working hours, but lifts iron weights weighing up to 200 lb. during his spare time. Claims it keeps him fit and provides the necessary stamina for tennis!

* * *

In contrast, **Tom Crawley** handles a heavy lorry for Transport Department during the day and spends week-ends quietly navigating a house-boat on the Leeds-Liverpool Canal. Ten years ago the craft was a discarded lifeboat. Tom picked it up for £8, and, with his son, **Peter**, Carrier Laboratory, spent three years rebuilding it.

* * *

Stan McKechnie, Drawing Office, City Factory, a member of Crosby Model Aero Club, has made 150 model planes in his spare time during the past nine years. During the summer he flies them in team-racing contests throughout Britain.

* * *

A Production Office clerk who would be equally happy as a horologist is **Jack Babcock**. He has ten home-tuned clocks and recently bought a 70-year-old cuckoo clock for 12s. 6d. He renovated it in a few months.

* * *

A magician who did his first trick as a schoolboy with an egg-cup and plastic ball, now saws women in half and swallows razor blades as part of his repertoire. He is **Jack Deacon**, Department 14, a member of the exclusive Liverpool Magic Circle.

* * *

Eric Evans, a signwriter at Stopgate Lane, recently had a pen-and-ink sketch of Chester



Pat Danher—an eye for colour



Stan McKechnie—man with wings



Eric Evans—and one of his sketches



Nora Duffin—girl with grit

Cathedral Cloisters on view at Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool. Eric, who “dabbles” in water-colours, enlists the aid of his non-artist wife to mix the paints. Reason? He’s colour blind!

* * *

In eight years, **Patricia Danher**, Department 388, Strowger Works, estimates that she has colour-tinted some 5,000 portraits, first as a full-time job with a well-known photographer, and, since joining the Company, as a spare-time hobby.

* * *

Thelma Howard, Department 801, City Factory, spends most of her leisure hours helping her brother train more than 30 pigeons for long-distance races to France, Belgium and other parts of the Continent. The partnership is successful, too, as local homing club records show.

* * *

John A. Greaves, Department 665B, Circuit Laboratory, has been awarded a silver miniature cine-camera for his success in a nation-wide competition for “The Ten Best” amateur films. His 16 mm. colour film, “To Camp in the Clouds” runs for only 20 minutes, but it took 12 months to edit and prepare. The film, made during a climbing holiday in Glencoe, was a first attempt, too.

* * *

Nora Duffin, Inspection, Department 97, although disabled, took up horse-riding some years ago. Her disability limited her skill at the sport, so she decided to have a serious operation which had only a fifty-fifty chance of success. Happily, she is now cured and has become a proficient horsewoman.

* * *

Women motor-cyclists? Yes, we have several at Strowger Works, among them **Joan Parton** and **Ruth Allday** of the Gauge Room. “Traveling by tram is too tame,” say the girls with the adventurous streak, who bought the machines with the idea of making a 1,000-mile holiday tour of Britain.

* * *

Although she is a drummer in her father’s three-piece band, **Elizabeth Blackman**, Telephone Systems Planning, would like to be a trumpeter in a brass band. The band trio is an all-family affair, by the way, mother playing the piano, and father the saxophone.



Jack Deacon—sharp appetite



Elizabeth Blackman—music-maker



TRANSMISSION DIVISION *The rapid growth of this division in post-war years has meant larger premises. Shown above is part of the Carrier Assembly and Wiring Department on the top floor at Strowger Works*

How business has grown...

What has the Company done since the war? The short answer to that is "a tremendous amount." So much, in fact, that it is difficult to know just where to begin this brief review and which events to include as milestones or interesting achievements in A.T. & E. history. The best way to tackle it, perhaps, is to glance at the post-war years from, first, the home and then the overseas aspects.

Folk who have been at Edge Lane since the war cannot fail to have noticed the rapid growth of our Transmission Division premises. This indicates the increasing emphasis laid on both multi-channel line and radio activities, but automatic exchange equipment has easily retained pride of place on our list of products, with the British Post Office as number one customer. The Central Electricity Authority, National Coal Board, British Railways and other State enterprises have also become big buyers.

To look after our post-war home sales, rentals, installations and servicing of private telephone systems, intercomms, etc., an extensive force was obviously needed, so—in 1947—we formed Communication Systems Ltd., a wholly-owned subsidiary which now covers most of the cities and towns in the United Kingdom. A few years before this event we obtained control of Hivac Ltd., first company in the world to manu-

facture midget and sub-miniature valves. Hivac's activities have been extended to cover all forms of thermionic technique, including cathode ray tubes, cold cathodes, transistors, non-linear resistors, valves for hearing aids, meteorological instruments, miniature radio receivers, etc. Development and manufacturing resources were recently increased by the building of a new factory at Ruislip, Middlesex.

In 1952, A.T. & E. (Bridgnorth) Ltd. was established. In addition to VHF radio telephones and ancillary equipment, this subsidiary company also produces equipment for telegraph apparatus and a section is devoted to radio, radar and other electronic requirements. In 1945, the Company acquired a considerable interest in the Pioneer Telephone Manufacturing Co. Ltd. Last year this became A.T. & E. (Wigan) Ltd.—a wholly-owned subsidiary—and it is now producing the complete range of mine telephones, signalling equipment and intercomms.

At Strowger Works, the Company took an important step when they established their own School of Electronics, which runs post-graduate courses in the complex science that is becoming increasingly important to our industry.

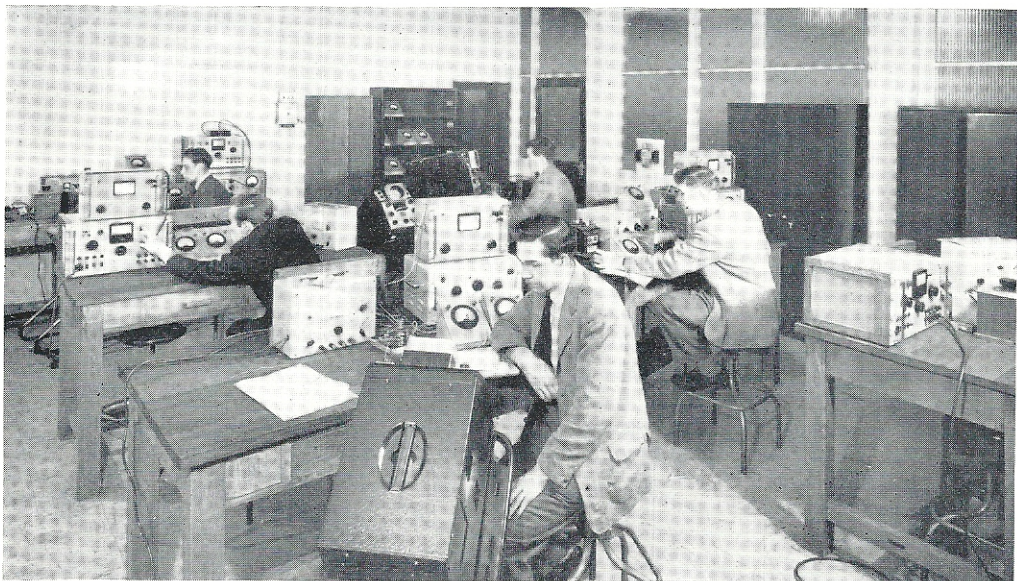
The above are just a few of the post-war home

activities of A.T. & E. But we feel they are varied enough to show that our interests have widened considerably. Production for the home market has developed satisfactorily and considerable stress has been laid on research.

Overseas, we have gained associated manufacturing companies in Australia, Portugal, South Africa and India, with associated distributing companies in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Portugal, Brazil, Argentina, British East Africa, Netherlands and Venezuela. Agents and representatives have been established throughout the Commonwealth and in a multitude of foreign countries.

South Africa has been our biggest overseas customer since the war. Altogether, she has purchased nearly 400,000 lines from the Company. This impressive total includes the whole of the networks of Johannesburg, Durban, Pretoria and Vereeniging, and Durban has also been equipped with an automatic trunk exchange. A modern telephone assembly and manufacturing unit has recently come into operation at Germiston.

In India, the government is proceeding steadily with the conversion from manual to automatic working. Much equipment is already in operation. Indian Telephone Industries Ltd., Bangalore,



SCHOOL OF ELECTRONICS *students in one of the laboratories. The post-graduate courses which the Company have launched will play an important part in training young men for our industry*



DEXTERITY AND PRECISION *Two operators at Hivac engaged on assembling miniature valves. Steady fingers and eyes are needed for this task. Hivac's premises are among the best of their kind in Britain*

established by the Indian Government in conjunction with A.T. & E., has a payroll of at least 3,500 workers.

Even the so-called Iron Curtain countries have become valuable customers of this post-war period. We supplied, between 1942 and 1945, approximately 14,000 lines for rehabilitation of the Russian telephone systems destroyed during the German invasion. No fewer than 42 mine shaft three-level signalling systems were supplied for collieries in the U.S.S.R. and we have only recently received an order for 5,000 ivory-coloured telephones from this part of the world. In Poland, during the past ten years, miscellaneous spares equipment, the equivalent in value to 20,000 lines, has been shipped, and a Polish Government party visited the Company a short time ago with a view to buying substantial quantities of our equipment.

Our annual total of telephone lines and the amount of other equipment supplied to overseas territories has grown enormously. It is impossible here to deal even briefly with all areas, but some impression will already have been gained of the progress that we have made. Since 1950 alone, the total number of lines of Strowger equipment made by A.T. & E. for both home and overseas is more than *one million*.

Yes, the old-time "Liverpool wire works" has grown from a small local business into a vast manufacturing organisation with many associated organisations at home and abroad and a huge world market. The men and women who have helped to make the Company into what it is are entitled to feel proud. But the story has not ended. Employees of today are already making the history of tomorrow.



Who's calling?



A man who may be champ for a long time took over as holder of last place in the London telephone directory. His name: V. K. Zzzu. Mr. Zzzu dethroned Lweiz Zzymbia, who had reigned for years.

The above item in a magazine set us thinking about our own P.A.X. telephone directory for Strowger Works and the branch factories. The best we can do is J. Zeen. Intrigued by the impressive list of surnames in the front of the directory, however, we delved further and came up with, we think, some unusual links.

Did you know, for instance, that we have quite a good gazetteer? There's Kent, Hampshire, Cheshire, London, Halifax, Preston, Lancaster, Bolton, Barrow, Durham, Formby, Hastings, Crewe, Buxton, Lincoln—not to mention Ireland, Holland and Wales. We also have a German, Dutch and Welsh. Now take religious associations and surnames . . . we have a Christian, Church, Pope, Bishopp, Preist, Prior, Monk and Sexton, also a Temple, Bell, Cross and a Peter and a Paul.

Among the birds we have a Partridge, Peacock, Falcon, Duck and Gosling. Then there's a Fox, Roach, Leech and Haddock. What about colours?

Yes, there's Green, Brown, Gray, Scarlett and Pink and, of course, Black and White. A few of our professions are Butler, Baker, Barber, Carter, Cooper, Carpenter, Driver, Farmer, Porter and just plain Workman. We also have a Heather, Hill, Fern, Forrest, Moss, Cragg and Woodland.

Look up the "pairs" and you'll come across Sergeant and Major; Furlong and Miles; Colledge and Dean; Hand and Legge; Wise and Guy; Watson and Holmes; Burns and Allen; three Daniels and three Lyons.

There are also a few notable "omissions." We have a Salt but no Pepper; George but no Dragon; a Rose without a Thorn; Warr but no Peace; a King but no Queen and a Dorr with no Handle. A trio that intrigued us was Gunn, Muskett and Cannon, and we were more than a little surprised to find we have a Nelson and a lady Hamilton!

All the above, remember, are names from our internal telephone book. Throughout the works and offices there must be many such surnames belonging to people not listed in the directory. Can anybody furnish more?



Number four in a series

Portraits of an Industry

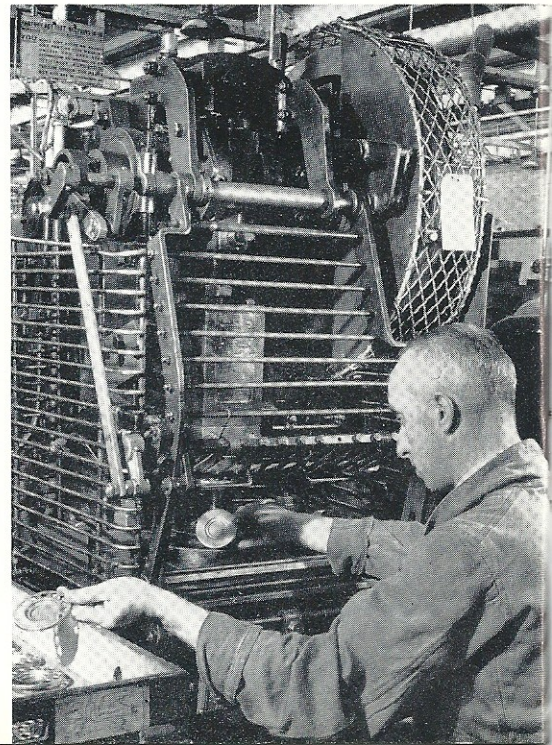
A little over half a century ago, the telephone was labelled as a toy. To all but a few far-sighted men, the invention was hardly to be classed as a serious step forward in the history of world communications. Now, however, the telephone has become a vital part of the working and social life of every modern community, the 'toy' has been transformed into a technical triumph and many thousands of people in workshops and offices are dependent on it for their livelihoods.

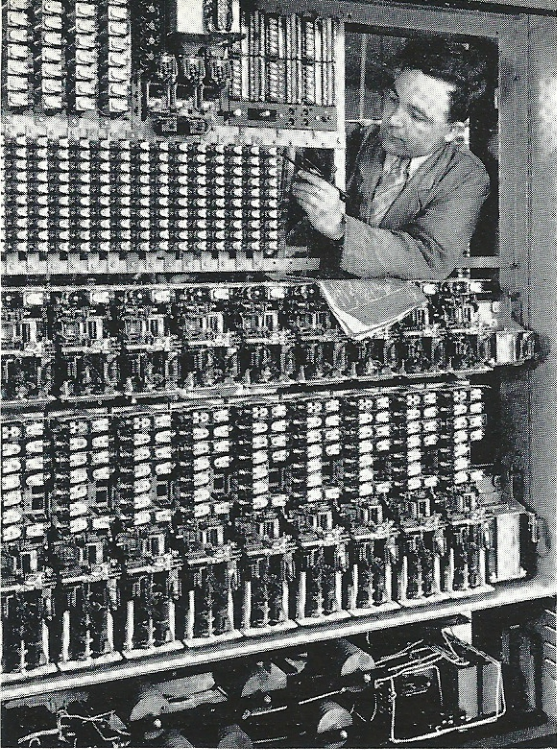
Don't imagine that the work you are doing doesn't matter all that much. It must do—when Man can safely claim to have learnt more about communications in the last fifty years than he has in the thousands of years since he first began to speak.



Automatic impulsing devices are used to test dials in Department 13

Finger plates are blanked out for telephone dials in Department 94



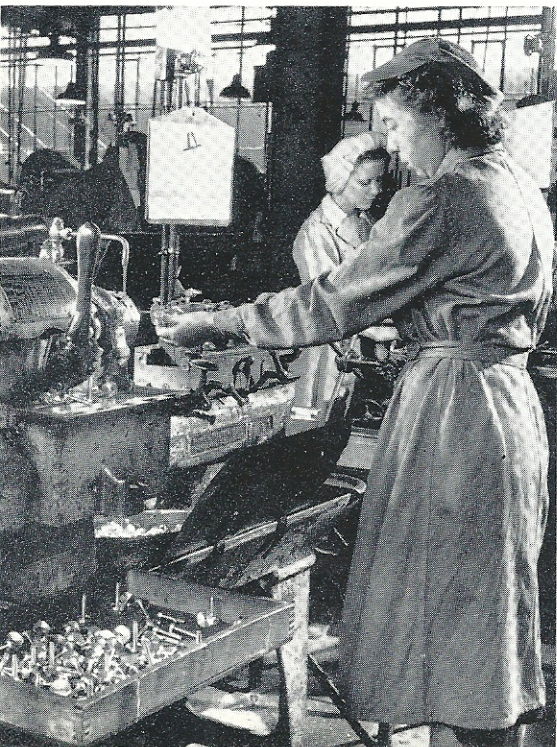


A 100-line PAX receives a final inspection in Department 27

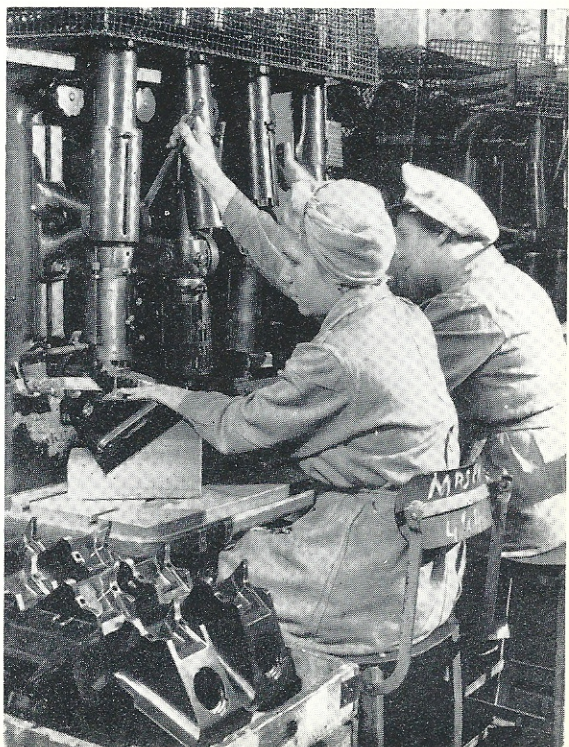


In Department 15, a final test is made on a Type 32A Selector

One of the employees in Department 99 machines uni-selector hubs



Girls in Department 93 engaged on telephone manufacture



In a city basement

The knife-edged breath of the River Mersey makes Dale Street a cold and deserted thoroughfare on a winter's Sunday evening. But turn off those empty pavements not far from Liverpool Town Hall, walk past a short alleyway, go down a flight of stairs, and you'll find yourself in another world—the hot, smoky, pulsing world of Jazz.

The long, basement club room is sure to be packed. The four-hundred-or-so members are mostly in their teens or twenties. Girls probably outnumber boys—but only just. They arrive in groups—seldom couples. Fingers snapping, feet

tapping, the fans are lost to everything except the exciting rhythm that is bursting over them in sometimes deafening waves.

In the thick of it all, serving out Dixieland and Traditional to regulars of the West Coast Jazz Club, is one of the north's brightest and most popular bands, the Merseysippi. And, in the forefront of the band, giving the lead to exotic numbers such as "Shake It and Break It" and "Chicago Buzz," is Pete Daniels, a burly bespectacled figure behind a "hot" trumpet.

The Pete Daniels of the jazz club—a clowning,



JAZZ CLUB FANS roar for more and Pete Daniels (centre) and some of the band oblige with a spot of impromptu clowning. The Merseysippi is one of the north's brightest and most popular bands



PUFF AND BLOW *Pete no longer smokes, but a short time ago he used to cope successfully with cigarette and trumpet—at the same time! Pete's parents once hoped that he would become a pianist*

gag-cracking, exuberant exponent of New Orleans-style specials—is a very different Pete Daniels from the man who spends working days behind a desk writing technical handbooks on the top floor of the Transmission Division at Strowger Works. A different man again from the ordinary fellow with a wife, new baby and home at Moreton in the Wirral.

His parents hoped that he would become a pianist, but, as Pete himself explains: "My efforts with Chopin broke my music teacher's heart and soul." His boyhood lessons taught him to read music, however, so while he was on military service in the Canal Zone, he landed a job with 108 M/U Royal Air Force Kasfareet Band—as the big drummer! "I didn't like standing around under an Egyptian sun with that drum on my chest, so I took up the cornet instead."

Alone, at night, in the middle of the desert, well out of earshot, Pete Daniels practised the cornet. When he returned home from the Forces, he met a few other amateurs and they began to hold "jam sessions" in front rooms. Pete even started his own band, a member of which was a young man named Lonnie Donegan, now a star

singer of modern "pops." Later, Pete joined Frank Robinson, a bus conductor, Don Lydiatt, owner of a fish shop, Ken Baldwin and a few others, in the up-and-coming Merseyside Jazz Band.

Success, via local dances and concerts, came swiftly. Now the band tour all the big towns as far south as Swansea and as far north as Newcastle and secure bookings at number one theatres such as the Empire, Liverpool. They have played on television, at the Festival Hall and they have made more than thirty records. Their "night of nights" was when they played alongside that other trumpeter, Louis Armstrong, Mr. Jazz himself.

Pete and the band have a couple of hundred items in their repertoire and they must put in a lot of rehearsal. They practise at one another's homes . . . and they are never surprised to find an audience outside the front window when the finish. Even their neighbours don't seem to mind.

Is the band likely to turn professional at some future date? "We are strictly part-time," answered Pete. "If we played anything other than spare evenings and week-ends we feel the fun would go . . . and jazz is great fun."

Packed with care *and even pride*

A vital part of any Company such as ours is the Despatch Department. On its efficiency, speed and method of packing may well rest future orders from customers.

People in A.T. & E. Despatch Department take pride in their job of getting away a schedule of 150 tons of telecommunications equipment a week for transport to docks, rail termini and airports. It's a department for the facile handling of rush jobs, too, when the occasion arises. A hurricane in the tropics or increased terrorist activity in Malaya may sound very remote from Strowger Works, yet these or other happenings in distant parts of the world can increase work in Despatch Department.

Some time ago, when a hurricane caused widespread damage in Bermuda—almost wiping out the colony's communications system—our despatch staff worked long and hard helping to get urgently needed telecommunications replacements out by air to Bermuda. Other rush orders which go by air are radio equipment (which is given priority transport) to places like Malaya and Cyprus.

The department's biggest job, though—and the men recall it with pardonable pride—was tackled only last year when the largest packing case ever to leave Strowger Works had a police escort to Glasgow Docks. The case contained equipment for the Indian Industries Exhibition, held in New Delhi, and was packed on a special low-loading wagon. This type of wagon was necessary when it was found that the load would otherwise have been too high to pass under any road-bridge in Britain.

Sending equipment all over the world to places as far apart as Newfoundland and New Guinea and Uganda and Uruguay presents many packaging



READY TO POST *Girls handle the smaller packages which leave the factory by ordinary mail*



INCOMING PARCELS *are also handled by Despatch Department. Here, packages are unwrapped*



CHECK-OVER BEFORE SEALING *Mr. Vanner and one of his foremen inspect equipment before a case is sealed in the packing shed. Our packing cases have a very high reputation with dockers for sturdiness*

problems. It is commonplace for people in the tropics to open cases of goods from England and find them inches deep in water, due to intense heat and condensation. Fortunately, this never happens with cases we send. But this is not just luck. Like all other details, both large and small, in the Despatch Department it is planned. For example, large-scale transmission equipment bound for overseas is packed in Polythene, which is non-porous, in preference to steel-lined cases.

A man familiar with the damage excessive tropical humidity can bring—such as rust, fungi and corrosion—is Bill Ramage of the Packing Shed. A former sea-going man, Bill has been to many of those “far away places,” the names of which he neatly stencils on the cases . . . places like Madeira, Portuguese East Africa, Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, and many more. There’s an interesting stencil—a wine glass—on most of our packing cases. A symbol internationally known in the world’s clearing houses, it means “Keep case upright in transit.” That’s doubly important where tall cases of switchboards are concerned. To “post” a switchboard by ship to Australia, by the way, costs roughly about £50 ; to South Africa, £35.

The man behind the scenes in this 100-odd strong department, Superintendent F. J. Vanner, treats the work of packaging as a science and his favourite saying is a byword among the staff: “There’s more to packaging than knocking a few nails in a case.” His recommendations to the Packaging Committee (they meet several times a year) have resulted in increased improvements in packaging and handling methods throughout the ten years he has been in charge of the department.

Mr. Vanner often visits the Physical Laboratory where Mr. Bob Beattie tests samples of sisal paper and other materials which are used to line our huge packing cases. A lot of the equipment goes into storage in our Packed Goods Shed—one of the few places in the Company where smoking is prohibited—and packaging with sturdy materials is essential. In this shed is held equipment for both British and overseas customers until they are ready to receive it.

Mobile cranes and fork lift trucks are used to lift the cases. The trucks can each lift three cases in one operation and are probably the most useful vehicles owned by the Company. The driver of one, stocky Mick Spillane, was the first man in Liverpool to operate a fork lift truck and, during



BIG LIFT *Driver Mick Spillane stacks cases awaiting delivery in one of the storage sheds*

his five years' service with the Company, he has hoisted an estimated quarter of a million cases without once making a faulty calculation. A fine record for a driver of a rare type of vehicle!

Nuts, bolts and replacement parts reach the Despatch Department in labelled trays. They are the smallest items parcelled. The biggest are 11 ft. 9 in. racks which come down a shaft direct from Department 24 by crane hoist and are lowered directly into prepared cases. In the packing of these cases staff in the department reckon to use some hundreds of miles of steel strapping a year and upwards of five tons of nails. The packing cases made by an outside firm to our specification, have a reputation with wharfingers of being the "sturdiest cases handled at the docks."



BIG HOIST *Mobile cranes are used to reach some of the crates and save many hours each year*

The man in charge of much of the packing work is Mr. James McKenzie—Mac to his colleagues—who, with 34 years' service, is one of the longest-serving employees in the department.

There are, of course, many formalities and a great deal of paper work connected with sending goods all over the globe and one of Despatch Department's closest allies is the Company's shipping department, which is situated in the General Office. This department maintains liaison with dock and air transport officials and customs men and some of the problems they face are the calculation of weight of packed equipment, tariffs, dock dues and insurance.

The task of sending our equipment overseas is a complicated and many sided business. A science, perhaps, as Mr. Vanner says.

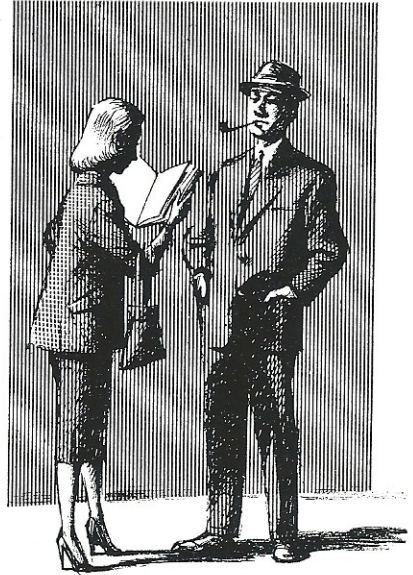
FANCY THAT!

Standing on the pavement at Piccadilly Circus, London, late at night, pipe in mouth and a book under his arm, he hardly looked like an engineer at work. In actual fact, however, he was a Company man checking on the volume of traffic using our road signals.

After he had been there a short while, along came a young blonde, eyed the engineer, stopped in front of him and brazenly took the book—an engineering manual—from under his arm and flipped through the pages. Mustering all his calm, the engineer inquired: "I trust you approve of my taste in literature?" Whereupon, the blonde flung back his book, tossed her head in annoyance and exclaimed: "How dare you speak to a lady with a pipe in your mouth?"

* * *

The department was on its best behaviour as the executives escorted in the very distinguished visitor from overseas. The V.I.P. knew comparatively little about the intricacies of what he was seeing, but he was anxious to learn and expressed interest in everything he was shown.



Noticing one young lady busy at her bench on a mass of complicated equipment, he stopped and inquired politely: "And what are you making here, my dear?" To which the lass replied: "I'm on 150 per cent at the moment, sir."

* * *

He was then Mister Anthony Eden and he was at Olympia, London, to open a big exhibition. The public address system for the show had been made by our Company and, naturally, everything had been tested long before Mr. Eden took the platform.

Immediately before his speech was started, however, somebody accidentally trod on the microphone switch mechanism and a wire parted. There was no time for replacements. One of our men acted quickly. He grabbed the parted wires, jabbed them together and, an instant later, Mr. Eden started to speak. If there was a tremble in the great man's voice on that occasion, it is understandable—the wire-clutcher's fingers were trembling, too!

* * *

Contributions to Fancy That are invited. Your amusing anecdotes—or even ideas for personal, human stories—similar to those above should have a definite Company angle to them. Tone will pay a guinea for each item accepted and published.



THE EX-PRISONERS REMEMBER *Pete Peters, Mick Jordan and Joe Walsh swap experiences in the local. All three were posted as dead before they turned up at the notorious Marlag und Milag Nord*

Dead men do tell tales

Three men who came back from the dead sipped their pints and talked about the not-so-cruel sea. Three former sailors re-lived, in the warm friendly atmosphere of the bar parlour, the cold harsh routine of a Nazi prison camp.

"Pete" Peters, Mick Jordan and Joe Walsh all work comparatively close to one another at our Edge Lane premises, but it is 15 years since they got together and spoke about Marlag und Milag Nord, a wartime German jail for more than 10,000 Allied seamen near Hamburg.

Urban Peters, Cost Office, first went to sea as a boy of 14. He has made no fewer than eight

world cruises, visited every major port and covered a quarter of a million sea miles. He was one of the survivors in November, 1940, from the S.S. *Mopan*, which was shelled and sunk in the Atlantic by the German pocket battleship, *Admiral Scheer*. He was aboard the raider, actually under her 11-inch guns, when she attacked and crippled a 35-ship convoy led by the immortal *Jervis Bay*. Mr. Peters was posted as missing, then later as dead.

Mick Jordan, of Department O1, had had three world trips behind him when his vessel, *Port Brisbane*, was blown out of the Indian Ocean by shells from a Japanese Q-ship—a disguised gun-boat. Mr. Jordan was picked up and made prisoner, although his relatives back home were informed that he had probably drowned. His pay was stopped.

Joe Walsh, a works postman, was in the Royal Navy as long ago as 1914. Recalled in 1939, he was a petty officer in the armed merchant cruiser *Voltaire* when she was destroyed by gunfire in the



CAMP COMPOUND *Pete, Mick and Joe spent several years behind the barbed wire above*

South Atlantic by a Nazi raider. More than six hundred of his shipmates perished, but Joe, wounded in the right arm by shrapnel, was picked up by the enemy craft. Back home, his wife became a "widow."

Church services were held for all three men. It was months afterwards before they managed to get word back to their relatives in England. The sea, in these three cases, had not been too unkind.

Mr. Peters and Mr. Jordan both spent nearly five years in Marlag und Milag Nord. Mr. Walsh was repatriated from the camp by the Red Cross after three and a half years and he recalls particularly a certain German dentist, who, asked to take out one tooth, removed the lot . . . for sport!

But time softens hearts and mellows memories, and there was little rancour towards their former jailers in the three men who sat and yarned in the local fifteen years afterwards. They were just three casual blokes chatting about their war experiences—the sort of men you meet any day in the office or at the workbench. Three so-called *ordinary* men.



ARMED GUARDS *watched their every movement but many men escaped thanks to daring ruses*



ROLL CALLS *in front of the huts in which the sailors lived for years. Uniforms were always pitifully few*



SHOUTING THEM ON *Four Service girls try the telephone-controlled racing cars built by engineers in their spare time at a cost of £10. The cars were a feature on one of the stands at the Radio Show*

Busy Lines



PEOPLE · PLACES · EVENTS

hear can detect the crossing period by touch. A nice idea, which has been copied with success in France, by the way.

* * *

Three Malayan authorities—the police, customs and fire service—have become our customers. They have all ordered VHF mobile radio equipment for vehicles and patrol vessels under their control.

* * *

Our articles on early Company history prompted a number of personal memories from Mr. H. H. Harrison, one-time chief engineer of the Company and now a governor of our School of Electronics. He recalls the factory of fifty years ago—with its “chronic overtime” as he calls it—and stalwarts such as J. W. Catchpole, E. Baldock, J. B. Redfern, John Sarvin and A. Brooker.

* * *

Flashback to the Radio Show . . . popular feature on one stand were telephone-controlled model racing cars, built for £10 in their spare time by engineers of the Switching Division at Taplow Court, our associated research establishment. The device was on TV and has proved a money-spinner at garden parties and fetes. Rolls Royce Ltd. were tickled with the idea and asked to

We hear from Mr. G. F. Perry, managing director of our associated company in Auckland, that the New Zealand Institute for the Blind are particularly grateful for the pedestrian signal system that we've installed at an arterial road in Auckland city centre. Buzzers have been added to the visual signals. These buzzers also transmit vibrations, so blind people who, additionally, are unable to



OVERSEAS VISITOR Mrs. Batra pictured with Mr. T. H. Fletcher who conducted her around Department 32. She is watching relay adjusters at work. Mrs. Batra also visited many other departments

borrow it. They collected and returned the cars in one of their own super-luxury models.

* * *

Colourful sari-clad visitor to Strowger Works a short time ago was Mrs. B. R. Batra, wife of the Chief Engineer of the Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department. Her son and daughter have both been studying in England.

* * *

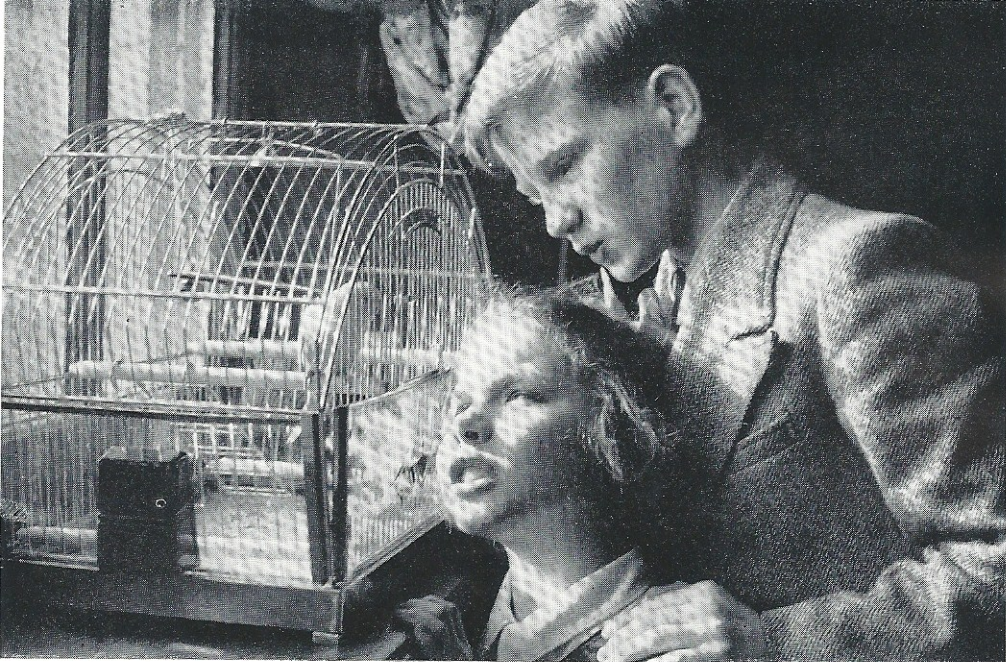
Seems as if the Channel Islands are beginning to feel the traffic problems of the mainland. The sun-soaked town of St. Helier has purchased sixteen sets of our latest Electro-matic signals. Well, *there's* a safe place for a holiday next year.

* * *

A valuable contract for a single channel VHF network was received this year from São Paulo State Water and Electricity Department, Brazil. Vital point in the scheme is a hill called Morro da Boa Vista (Hill of Good View) which rises to over 3,000 feet. No one concerned had seen it nearer than from a helicopter, but a party which included Stanley Cotterell and Jack Willock, of Telefonos Automaticos e Equipamento Electrico, Ltda., soon put that right. They conquered the difficult hill the hard way—on foot. The knowledge they gained has proved valuable.



CONGRATULATIONS from Mr. Robert James and Miss Maud Carpenter of Liverpool Playhouse, to Miss D. M. Cubbin, Women's Welfare Supervisor, who wrote the script to a series of tableaux shown in the factory during the recent Industrial Safety Week



PLEASURE IN SOUND *Why do people keep cage birds? To these two children the answer is: "They sound so nice." Both youngsters are blind. A Liverpool children's hospital has its own aviary*

The happy prisoners

It was, he recalls, yellow with green markings. It had the brightest eyes, the cheekiest chirp and the darnedest way of wrapping itself around a young boy's heartstrings. Even now, after half-a-century, Harry Peake, Secretary of A.T.M. Cage Bird Society, still gets a glow of pleasure when he remembers that small canary—the first he ever owned.

The bird was bought the hard way, with carefully-hoarded pennies earned from greasing bread tins for a local baker in his native village. He kept the canary in a home-made wire cage in his bedroom. So began for Harry Peake an intense love of birds that has lasted throughout his life.

Even as a private during the first World War, Harry managed to acquire cage birds to make his temporary billets more homely, leaving the birds behind for others to enjoy when he moved on. His wife cannot recall a single holiday during the early years of their married life when they didn't take their birds along with them to their seaside lodgings. And part of her housekeeping budget would always be spent on new-laid eggs to feed their canaries—"the most difficult birds to keep."

Four years ago, Harry realised that many of the people he kept meeting at local shows were folk he often saw during his working day—Strawger Works colleagues. He asked a few of them: "Why don't we form a cage bird society of our own, affiliated to the Sports and Social Organisation?" Their enthusiasm was unmistakable, and, in November, 1952, the first meeting was held at "Whitfield," attending—Harry Peake, George McGinn, George Stevenson, Albert Coburn, Bob Muncaster and E. Halcroft. Mr. McGinn (the club's only life member) became first secretary, and Mrs. Peake was elected the first woman member—an appropriate honour for

a woman who had spent many draughty midnight hours on railway station platforms waiting for the return of unaccompanied show birds travelling home "care of the guard."

There are now some fifty members of the Cage Bird Society—men, women and children who own a vast collection of budgerigars, canaries, parrots, Australian zebras, exotic humming birds and many other varieties. Such is their enthusiasm that at least two-thirds of the total paid-up members put in appearances at Cage Bird Society meetings, held on the second Thursday of every month at Old Swan Social Centre, Derby Lane. Here, they enjoy lectures, quizzes, discussions on how to breed the "perfect" bird (the ideal: broad head, plump chest), cross-breeding (there are 1,830 different genetical species) and their own shows with visiting judges to give impartial verdicts.

Although a member may have as many as a hundred birds he will choose only about a dozen of his best to exhibit, and his showtime routine seldom varies. The birds are brought in from their aviary (usually in the garden) to a bathtub

in front of a warm fire. Here, they are carefully bathed in a mixture of warm water and mild soap flakes before being dried in a soft towel. A man with as many budgerigars as Harry Peake will buy birdseed by the hundredweight and use about 3½ lbs for a week's feeding.

Not all the members have gardens and some aviaries are kept in spare bedrooms. George McGinn, for instance, keeps his in an upstairs room. He was disappointed when he realised that a wider entrance to his small garden for his invalid chair would mean moving the birds indoors, but George has learned to be philosophical about such matters.

Sunday is the most popular day for club members to visit each other's aviaries, comparing notes and buying and selling birds. About 20 very colourful, though less rare type of birds, have been passed on by club members to Liverpool Bird Society, who have provided a ward aviary in Alder Hey Children's Hospital, Liverpool. Here, many a sad little patient in a sick bed has been cheered back to health by the happily fluttering prisoners in their sun-lit cages. To the local bird lovers, that is recompense indeed!



BUDGIE'S BATHNIGHT Before shows, prize birds are bathed in warm water and mild soap flakes and carefully dried in a soft towel. Cage bird shows are a regular feature of our sports days



IS IT COLD? *An experimental toe is lowered into the water by a club member at Dovecot Baths*

This friendly, six-to-sixty club owes its origins to one man, Mr. Harold Redhead, Cost Office, Strowger Works. An ex-Royal Navy man, Mr. Redhead joined the Company shortly after the first world war. In the 1920's, evidently missing the water, he often hurried across to Picton Road baths in his lunch hours for quick swims. Other Cost Office colleagues began to join him. Soon, with half-a-dozen or more turning up regularly, Mr. Redhead suggested a club. He became first treasurer, held the post for 25 years, saw membership grow from a mere handful to more than four hundred at one period, and, in 1952, became vice-president, a post he still holds.

The club's first coach, the late Mr. Ted Parker, taught many present-day swimmers their first

Grin and splash

INTRODUCING A.T.M. SWIMMING CLUB

Come on in, the water's fine! Outside, it's as cold as a foreman's frown, but inside they've taken off the chill. After that first fierce, tingling plunge, you'll gasp out loud and then begin to grin. Swimming in the winter? It's great fun, as you'll find out any Wednesday evening if you go along to Lister Drive Baths, Liverpool, where A.T.M. Swimming Club are now holding their evening sessions.

You don't believe us? Well, take a peep for yourself! It's eight o'clock exactly and club chairman, Eric Williams, Department 41, is already starting to coach a pair of laughing boys who are clinging to the bath rail and kicking the green waters into milky foam. The boys, young sons of older members, are quickly joined by twenty, maybe thirty, other enthusiasts. There isn't a dismal face in the house as all of them put



EXPERT COACHING is free to all members from chair-man Eric Williams at Lister Drive Baths

strokes. With a great number of members on which to draw, the section soon began to win recognition in local business house competitions, and, in the 1930's, the name A.T.M. appeared on scores of Merseyside trophies. It is probably true to say that, in Liverpool, no other Company club was able to match them.

Gala nights, at the Harold Davies Baths, Prescott Road, often attracted over eight hundred spectators (more were turned away) and these events became second only, in the social life of the firm, to the annual fete of the Sports and Social Organisation itself. Gala nights are now annual events and fourteen have so far been staged.

Club vitality was seriously weakened during the last war, of course, and the sport generally was rather badly hit. Since the war, however, there has been a revival of interest and the club was fortunate in finding two first-rate coaches. Six-foot-three Walter Bradley, record-making Morecambe Bay swimmer at his first attempt and holder of many championships, ran a series of successful life-saving classes for the club. His successor, Frank Parrington, formerly of Department O1, husband of famous swimmer Lilian



GALA NIGHTS are highlights. Here members stage a comedy item using a large rubber dinghy

Preece, tutored many other A.T.M. swimmers and he is also renowned for his successes with young Neil McKechnie, holder of three national championships and a British Olympic choice this year. The late Mr. Dave Williams, father of the present chairman, was also a former club coach.

Club president is Mr. Arthur Bell, chairman of the Sports and Social Organisation, and the present officers are Eric Williams, Jack Clarkson, Department O1 (Secretary) and Jack Callaghan, Department 15 (Treasurer). The club are currently holders of five business house trophies. There are at least six major annual trophies open for competition, membership is growing steadily, there is first-rate tuition and ample opportunity for relaxation . . . so why not get in the swim ?

Credits

Exterior pictures of Calder Hall, pages 2 and 3, supplied by United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, photographs pages 6 and 7 from Manchester Ship Canal Company, camp scenes page 23 from "Albert R.N.", an Eros Films production, and photograph page 26 from Picture Post Library.



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